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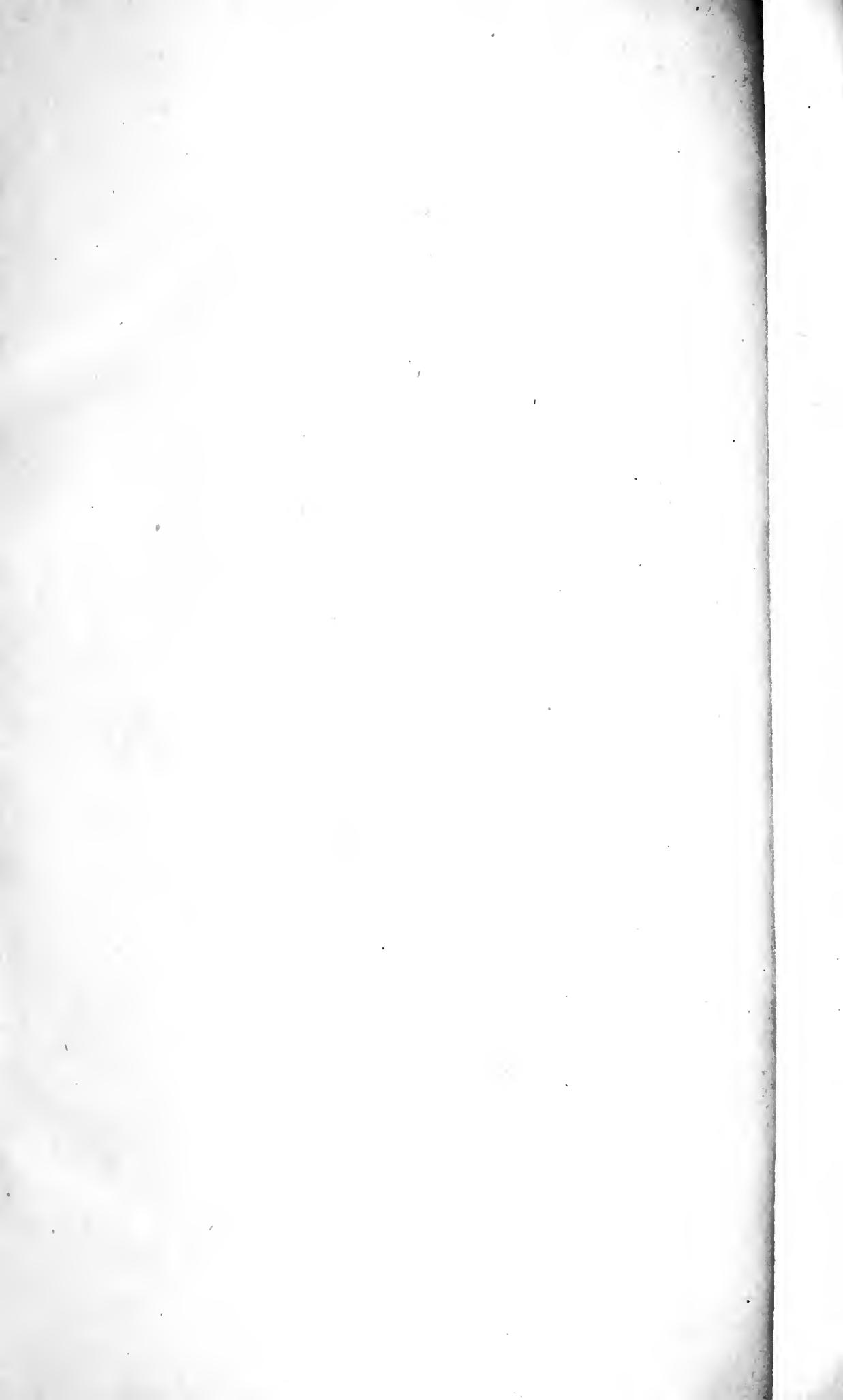
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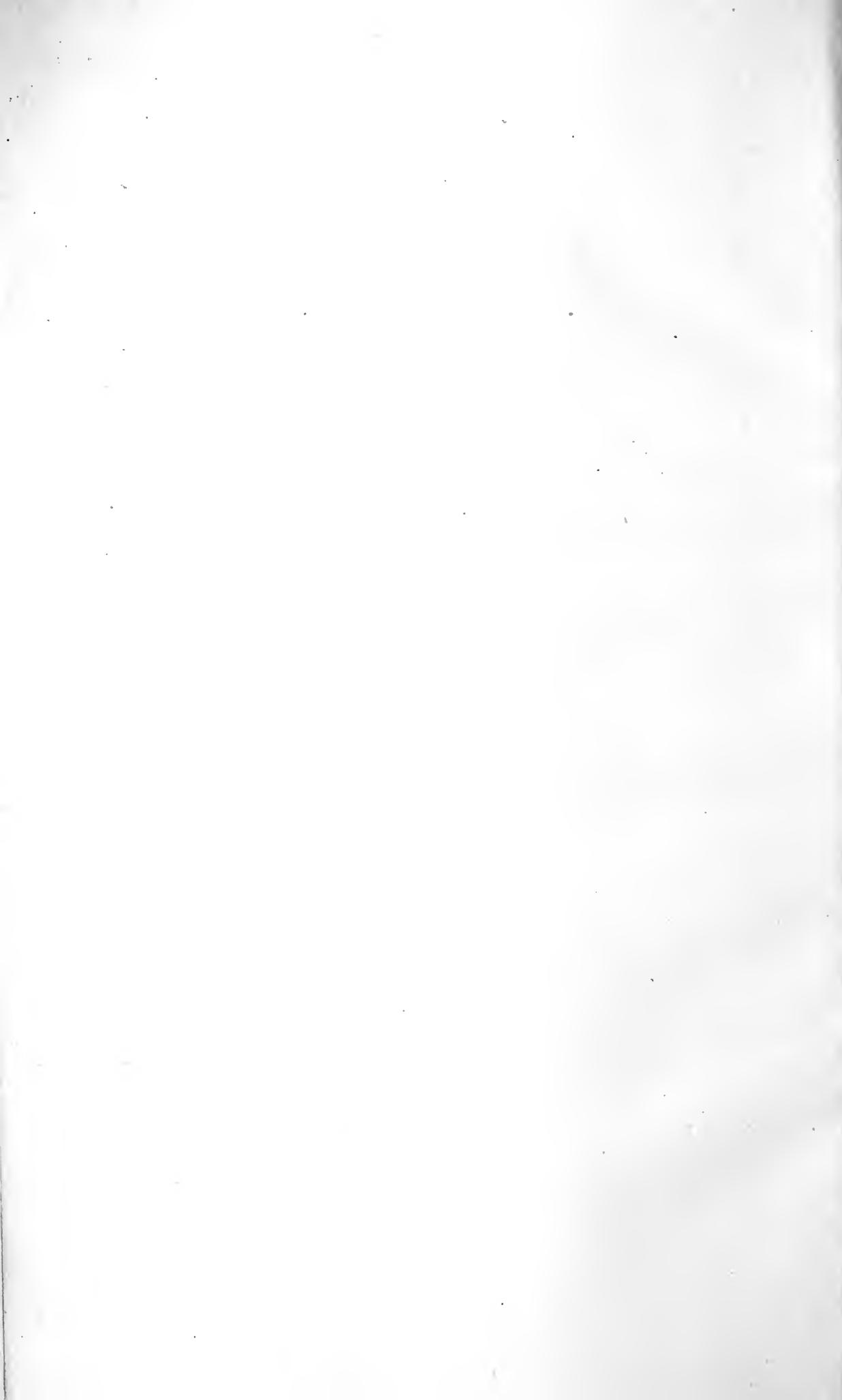


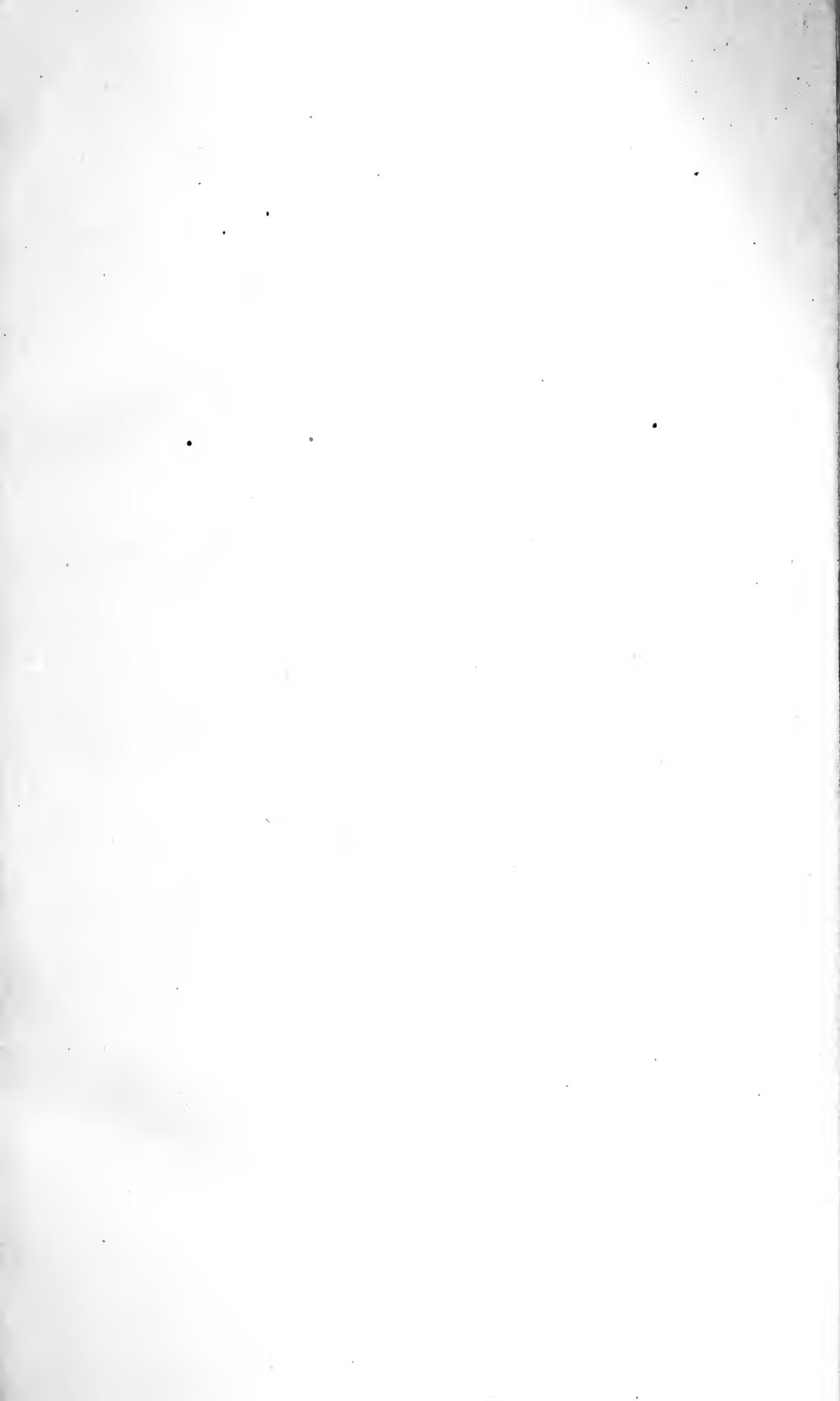


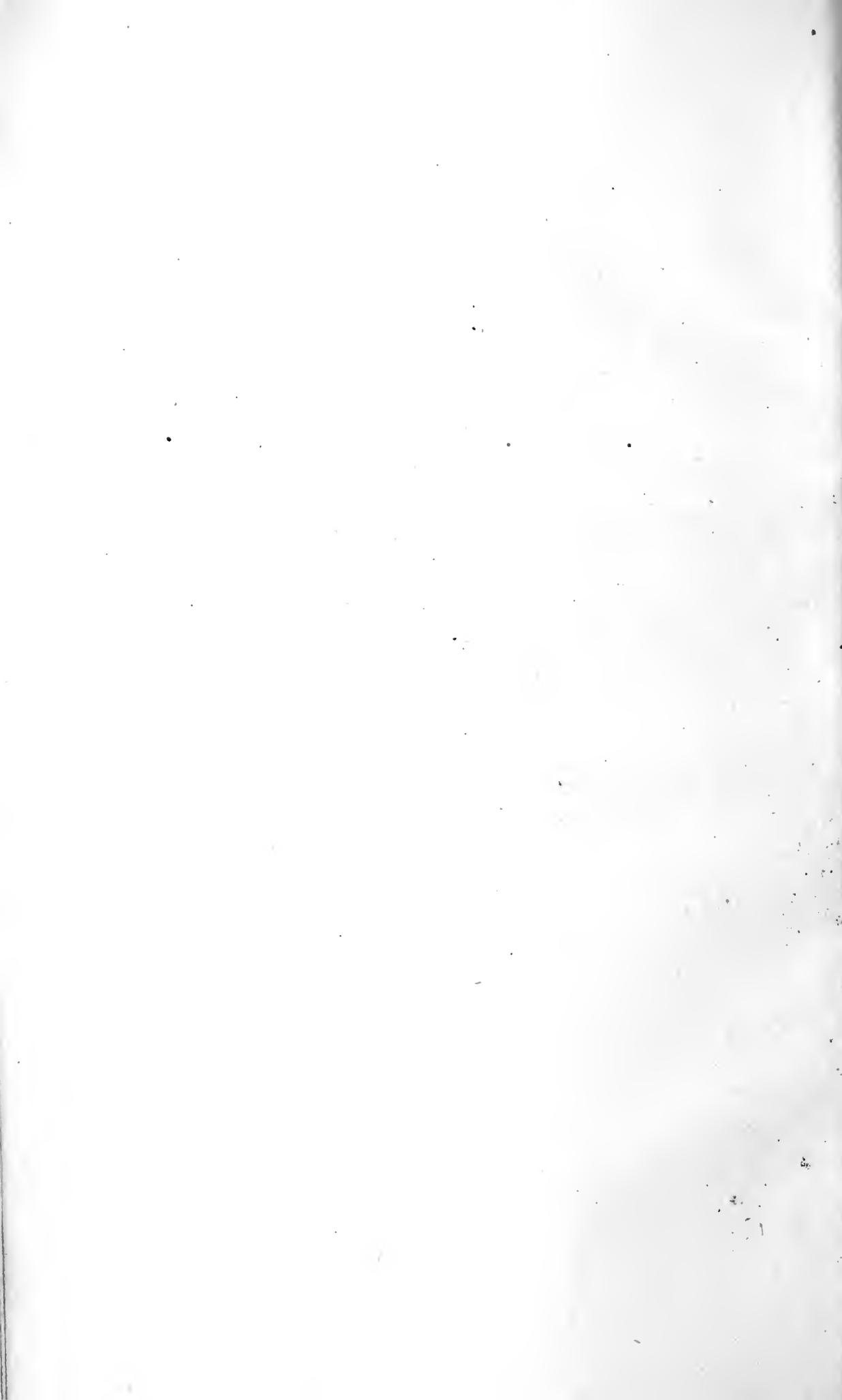


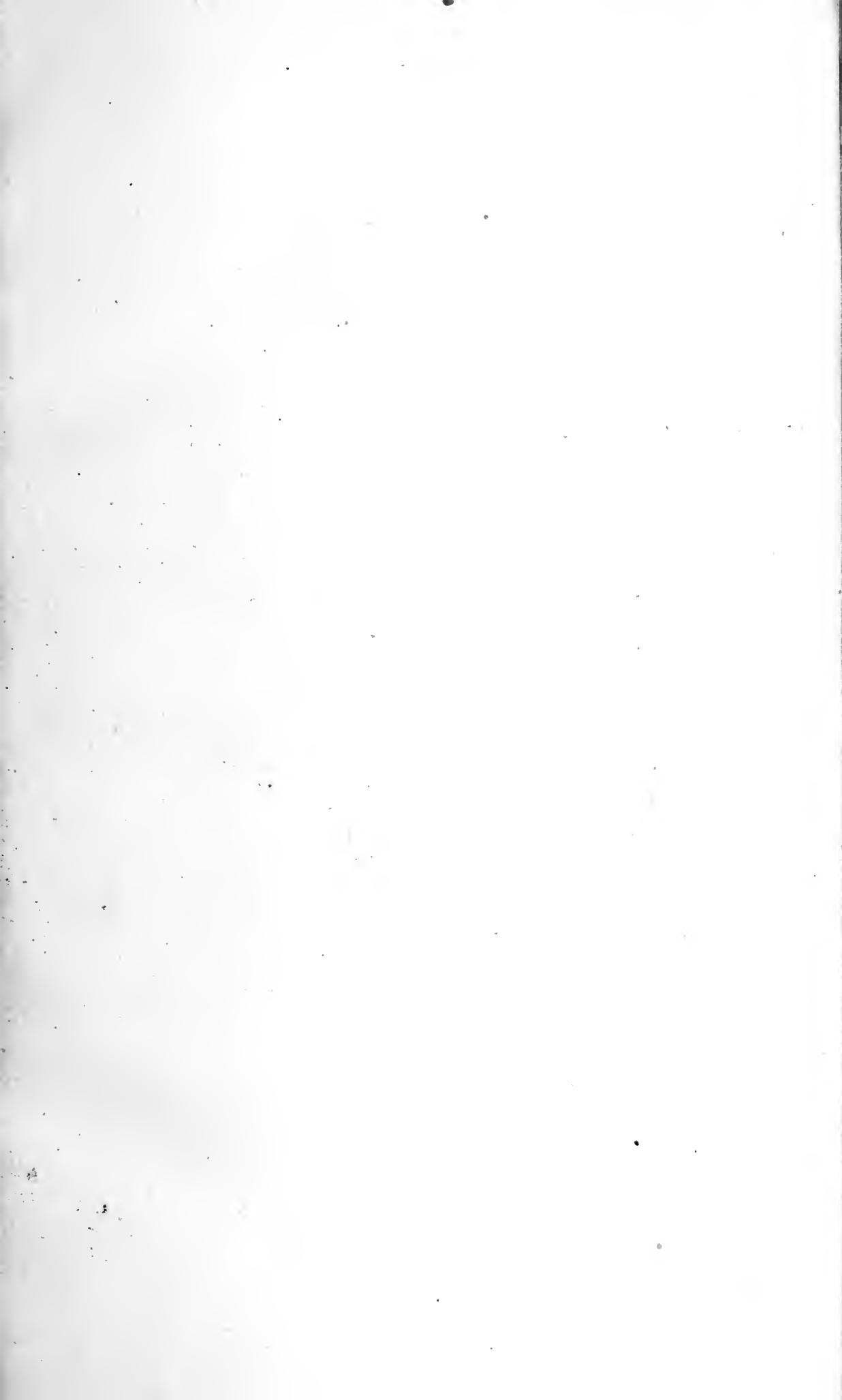


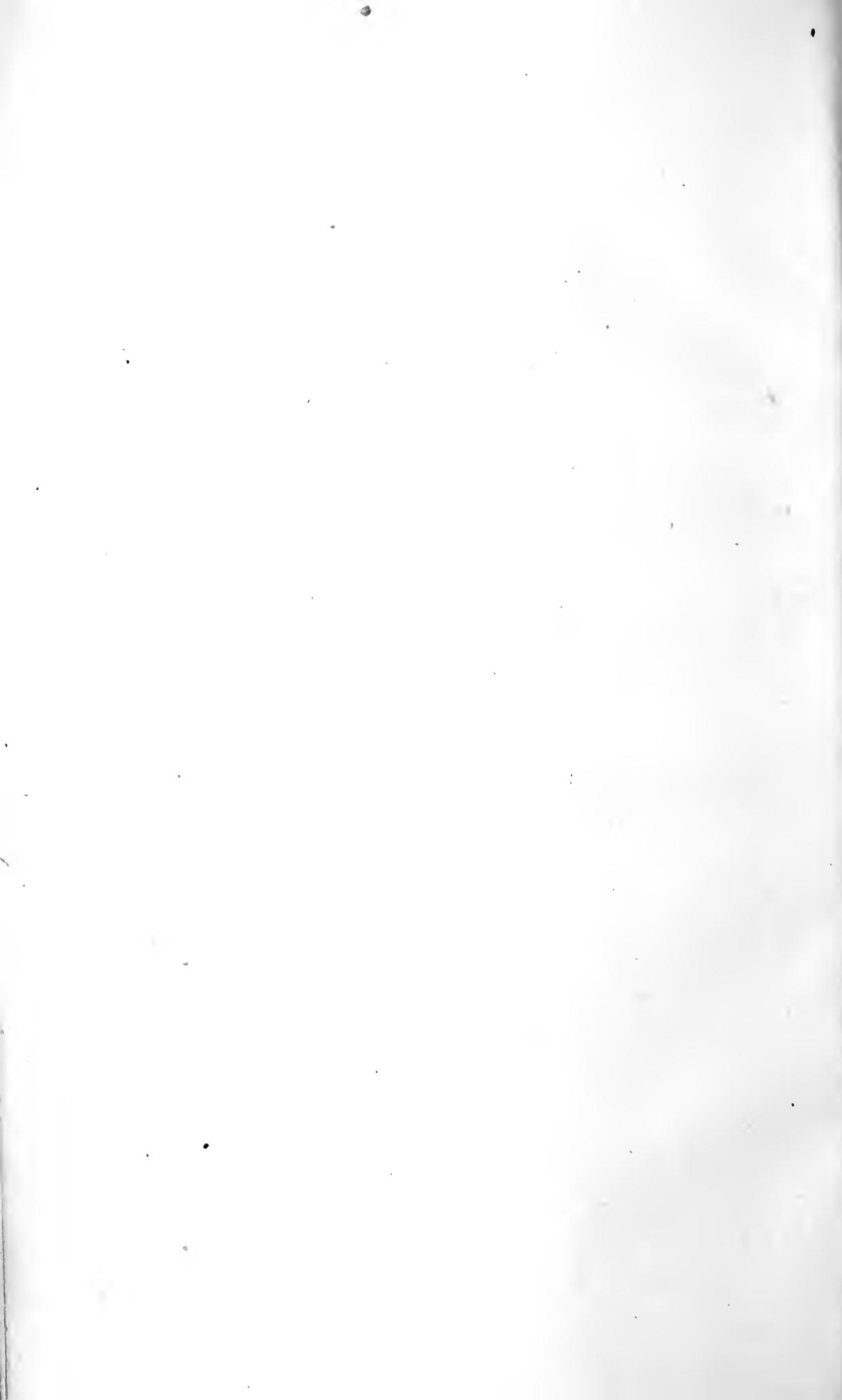


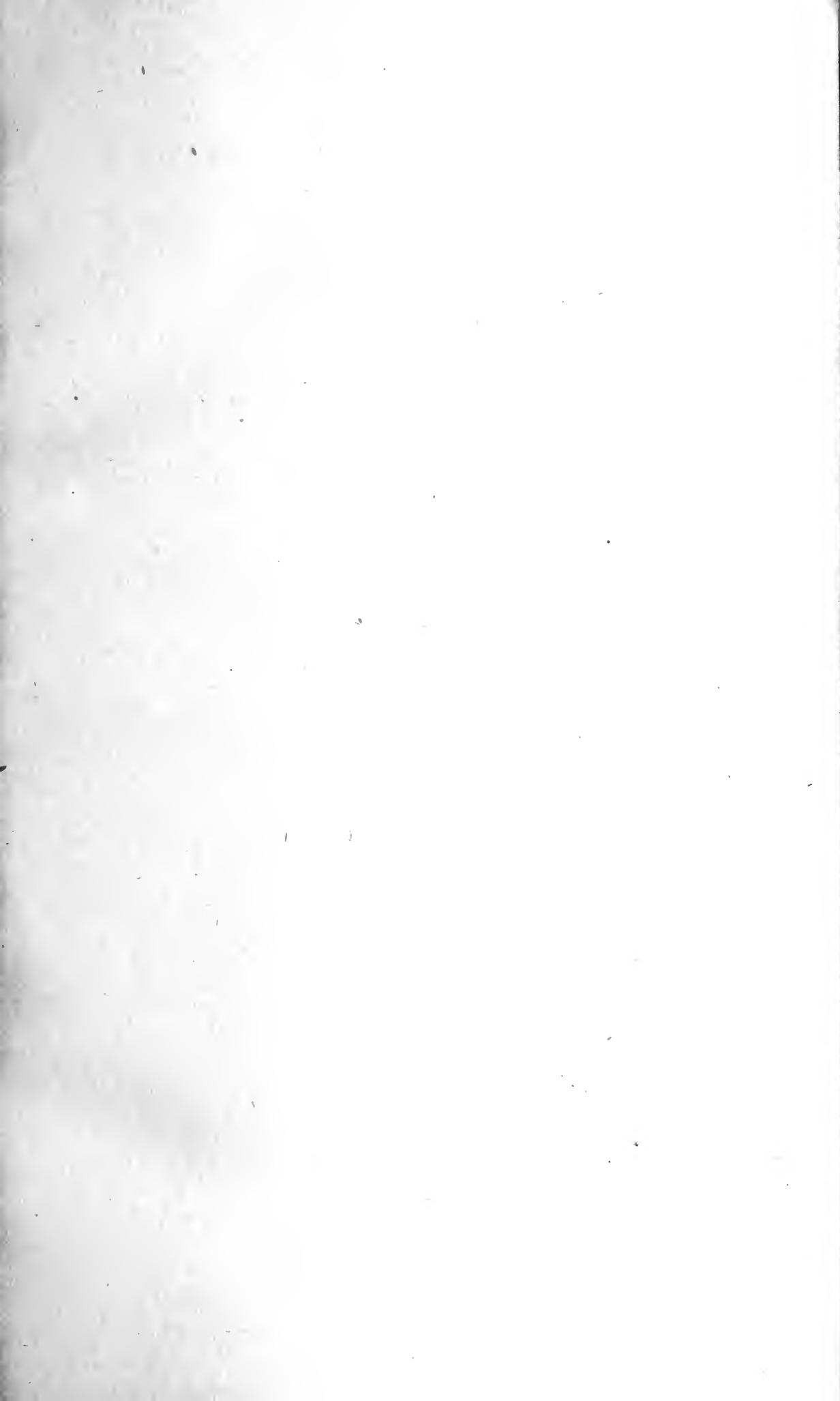


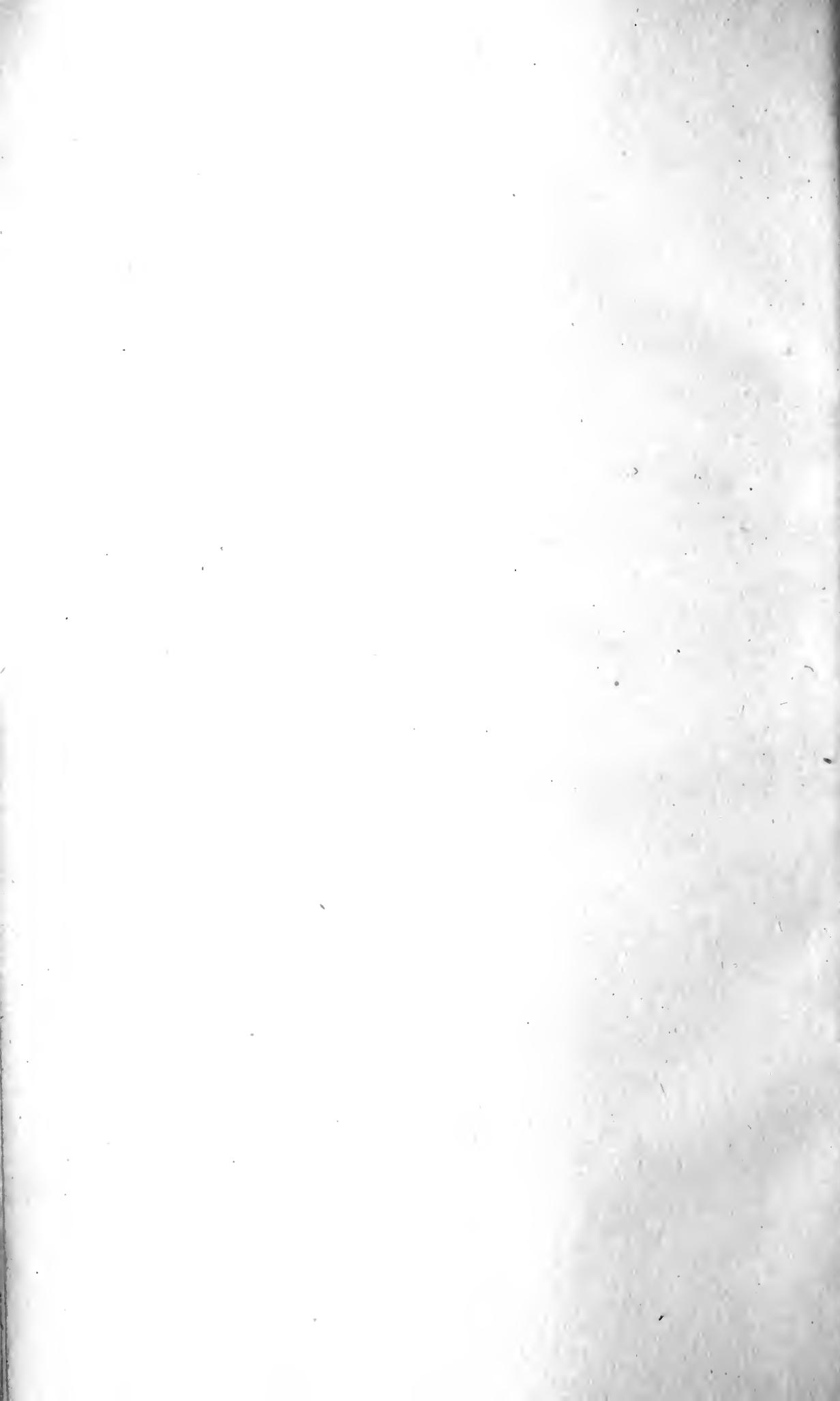






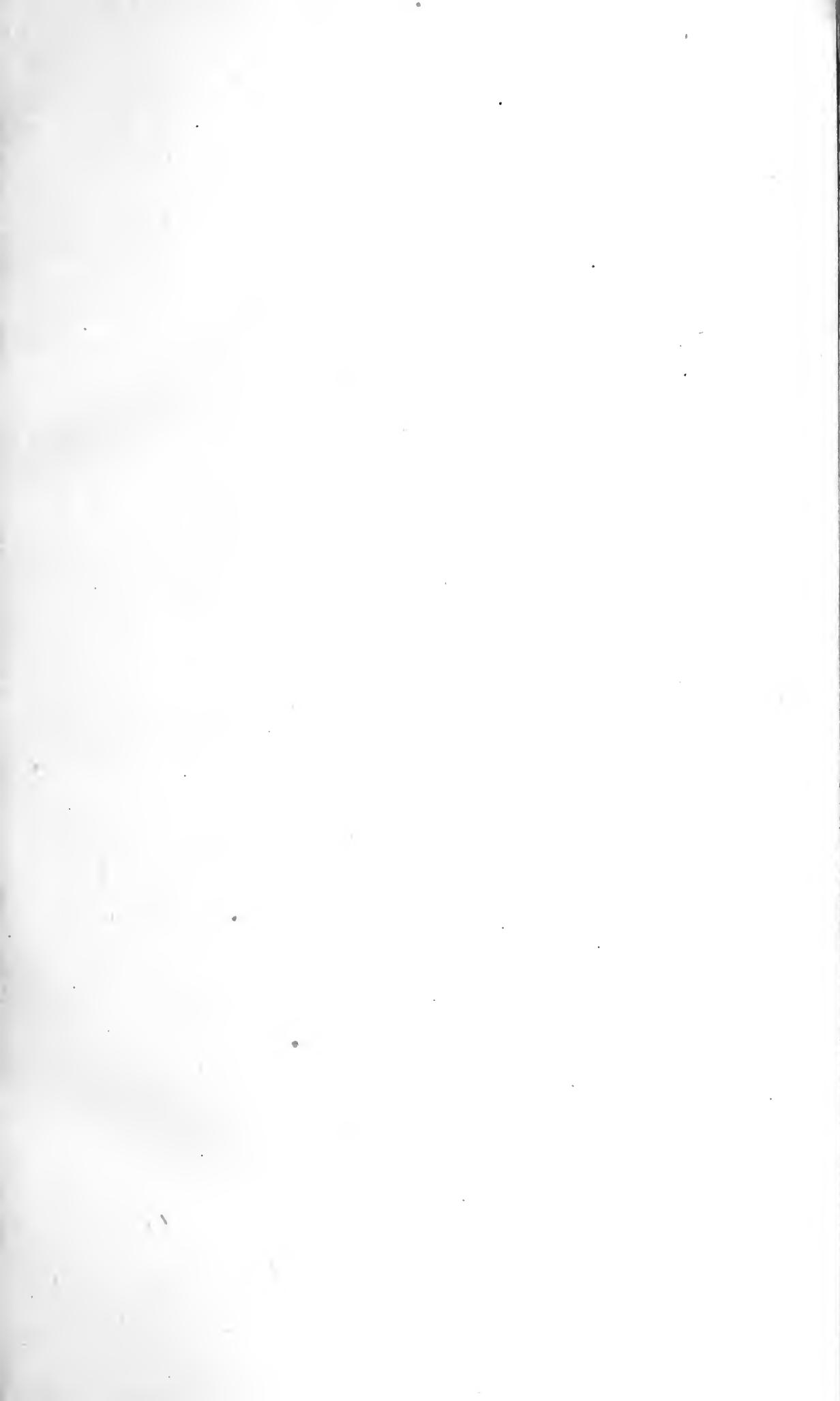


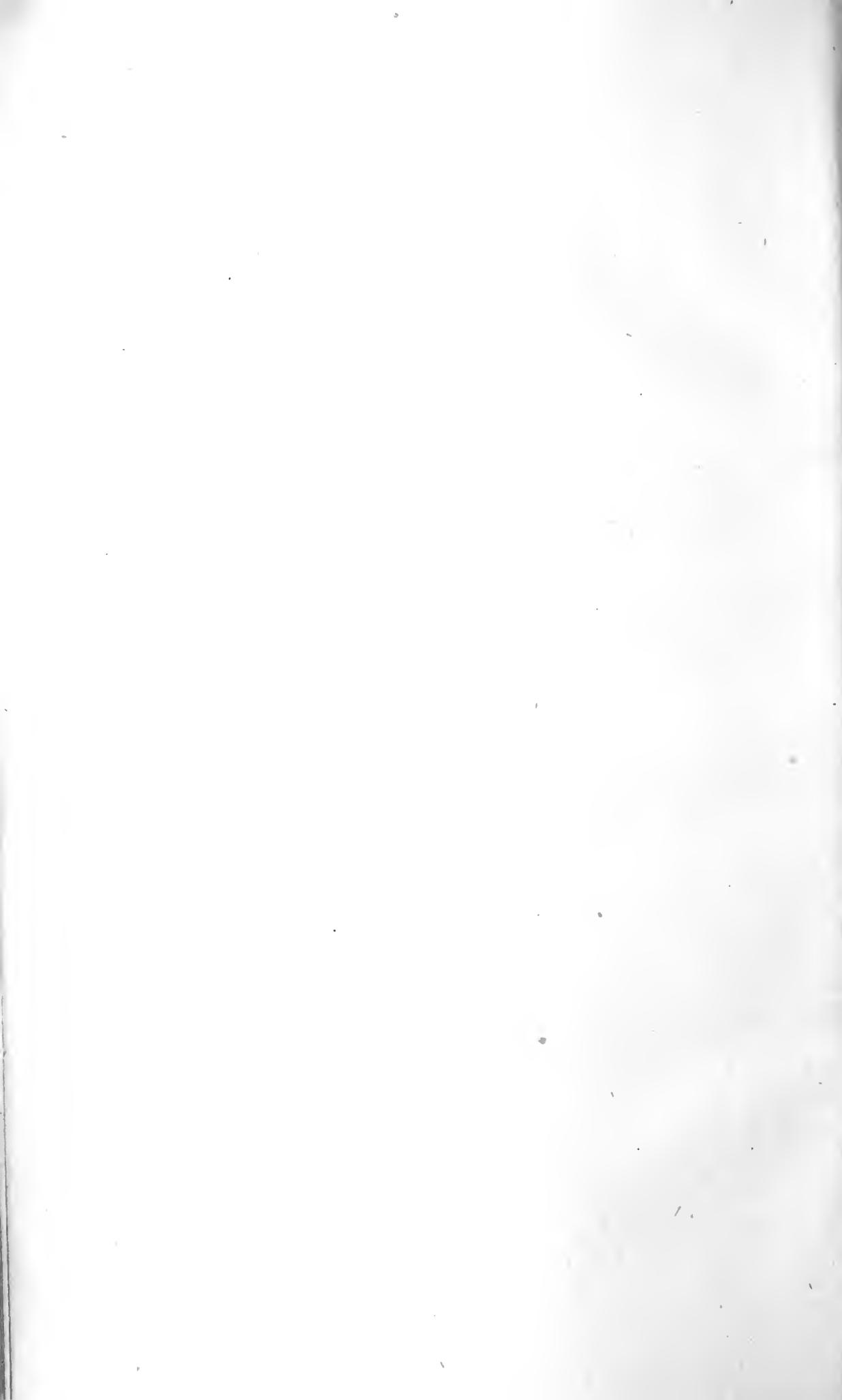


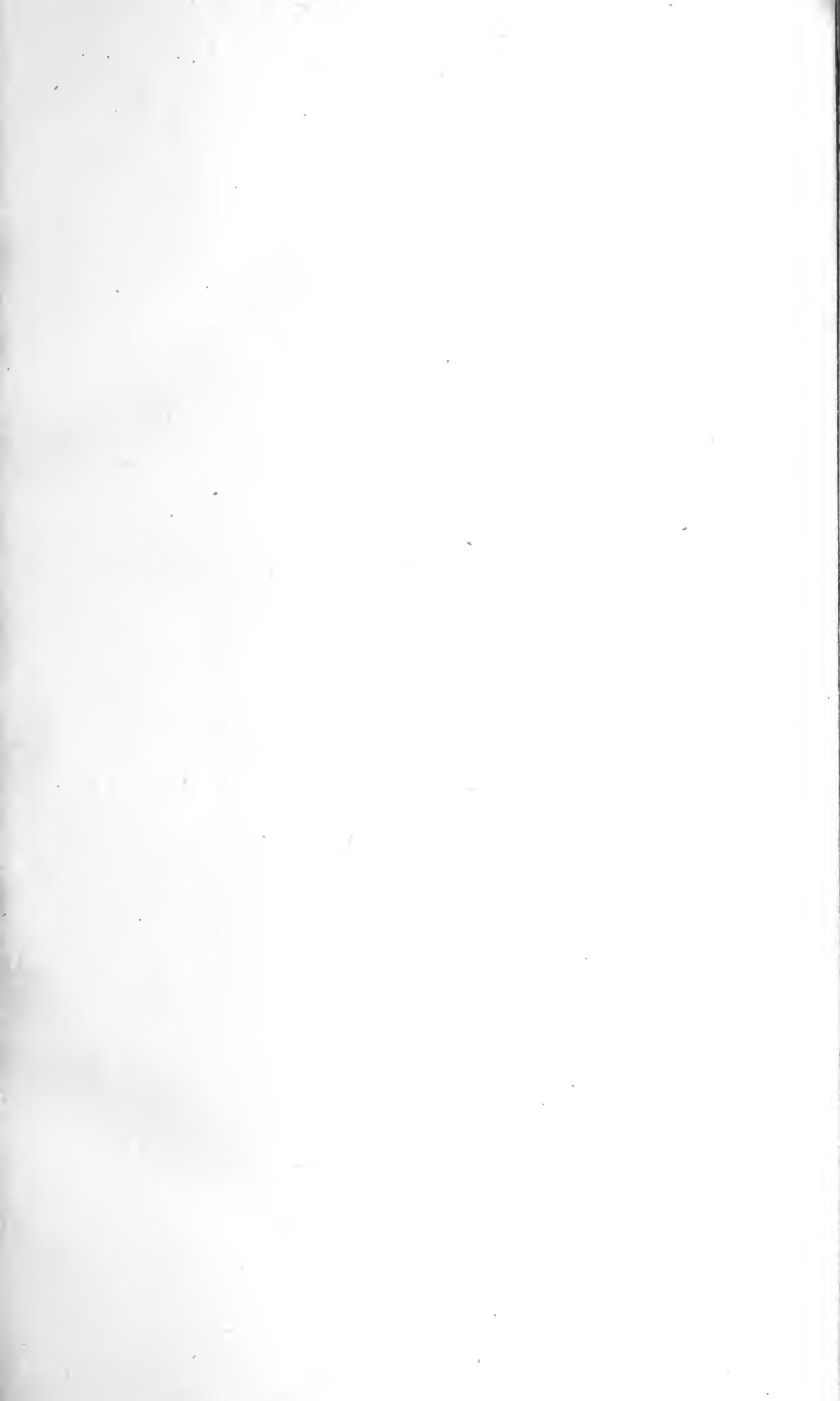


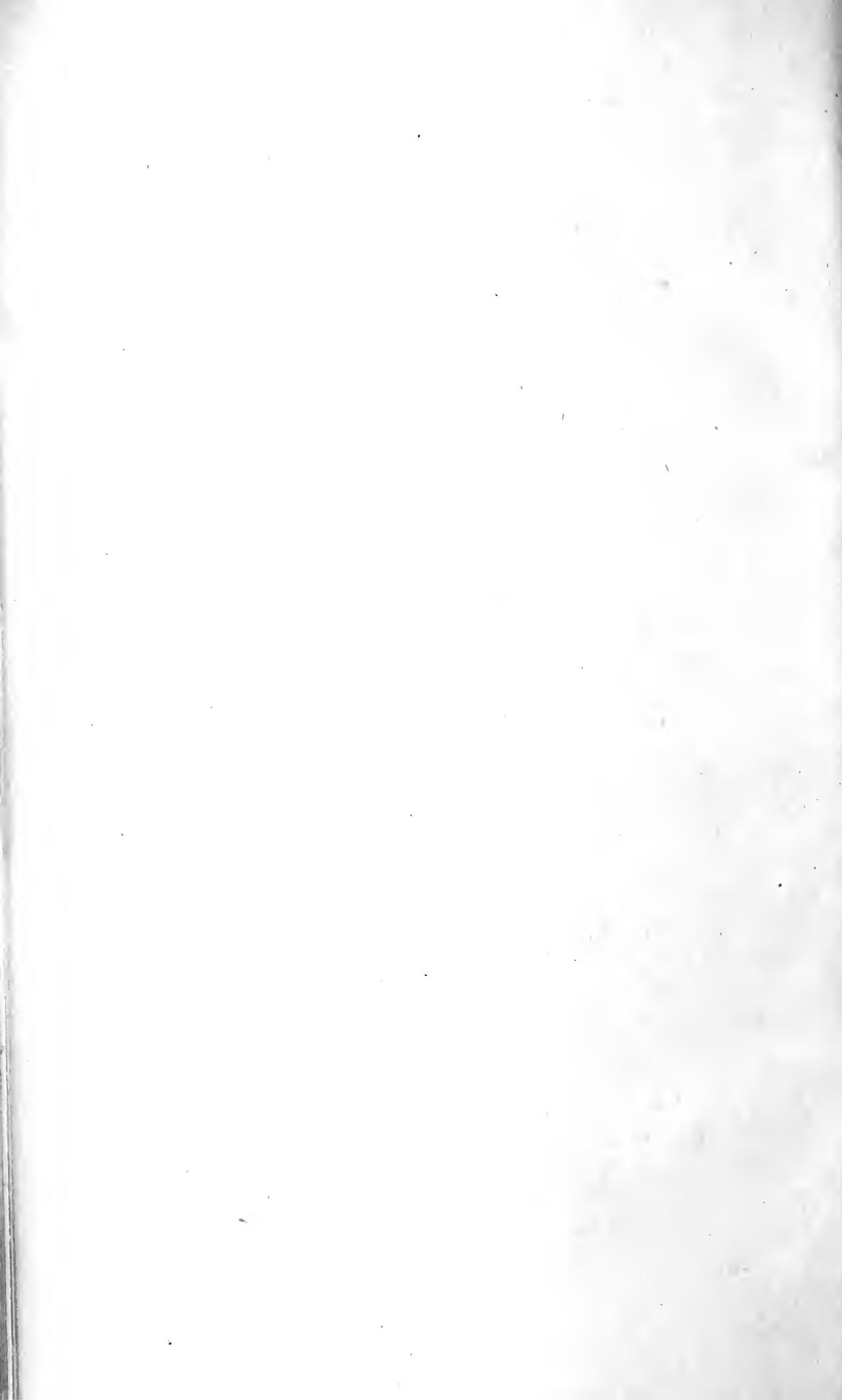












STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE

OF USEFUL INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE.

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JANUARY, 1840.

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## INTRODUCTION.

Many of the friends from whom I am sundered wished to read and keep by them copies of the letters I occasionally write, chiefly to the members of my beloved flock in Ashton and its neighbourhood. Their love for me as an old friend led them to set a higher worth upon these letters than they otherwise possess. To answer this call, it was agreed amongst them to hand over the original letters to Mr. Willis, of Manchester, for publication. I have nothing to say against this arrangement. They are not likely to do much harm; I hope they may do some good. At present I can do no more than write in this way. When Parliament meets, I shall most likely learn whether it be "law" to hinder a man from writing what he will, and as he will, although he happens to be in goal. There are several of my sermons, essays, &c. &c., in the hands of my friends, which will be forwarded to the publisher for insertion in the subsequent numbers of this magazine. Some of these have been written for years, and to my friends will not be the less valuable on that account, as they will show the spring and growth of a mind that has always, since the dawn of thought, been seeking after the truth.

Should this design be approved of, the present work will undergo such alterations in size and appearance as the demands of the public may require.

*The "Castle," Chester, Dec. 31, 1839.*

## PRINCIPLES REVIEWED.

*The "Castle," Chester, Sept. 12, 1839.*

MY DEAR SIR,—You are one of the oldest of my friends in the neighbourhood where I have spent the last seven years of my life. You have been with me in the midst of many outward changes, and can bear witness, better than most men, to the unwavering steadiness of mind, with which I have gone onward to the mark I have had before me, utterly heedless of all that might be said or done against me in the meanwhile, by those, who either did not understand me aright, and therefore withheld me ignorantly, or by those who saw clearly what the object of my proceedings really was, and on that account pursued me with the most determined and inveterate malignity, lest the peaceful triumph of the truth should end in the overthrow of their own unhallowed undertakings.

I did not take up the cause of the poor, the weak, and the witless, without much previous consideration, both as to the subject itself, and the manner in which it could be best brought before the eye of all, foes as well as well as friends of the cause of truth and righteousness. I clearly saw the utter impossibility of working out any lasting good unless I threw overboard every maxim of worldly policy and expediency. I found the people had been for ages, and still were, in the hands of rival parties, who, in religion and in politics, aimed at the same end, though they pursued it by very different means. I knew that so long as this was the case, it mattered nothing, or but little, which party was predominant, inasmuch as the principles on which they all were founded were not calculated to produce genuine, universal and permanent happiness to mankind at large. It was therefore necessary, that as one who earnestly desired and humbly strove to bring about that happiness, I should at once, no matter what the risk, the danger or the loss, cut myself loose from all connexion with party men, and abjure the advocacy of all party measures. The consequence of this has been what I well knew it would be. All parties have in turns endeavoured to make my exertions subservient to their own purposes, as soon as they beheld the wonderful effects produced upon the

people by the simple preaching of the truth; and all, in turns, when they found I could not be brought over to their party views, have denounced and have done their utmost to destroy me. I told you the time would come when true friendship for the people would be best shown by opposing their most darling schemes, or the schemes rather of mistaken or interested men, who make popularity the touchstone of truth or the stepping-stone of their individual ambition. Has not that time arrived, and have I not withstood the people to their face, as fearlessly and as coolly as I ever withstood the mightiest of their oppressors? Popularity is not my point; I seek to do the people good, and I therefore always tell them what I believe to be true, and what I hope will be conducive to their advantage, no matter whether, for the time being, they be pleased or displeased. Truth and time will set all things straight. Much that now seems wrong will be found to come right in the end. He, who is over all, makes all things work together for good to them that love him, and walk in his ways.

I would not write to you till the hurry and whirl of men's minds had settled: you can now think of things coolly over. Do so. You can talk them over: do this also. When you have done so, speak out, and say boldly, whether, in any one point, you have found me changeable and wavering. Am I not the self-same man in my dungeon to-day, as you have found me at home, abroad, in confidential conversation, or addressing tens of thousands of the people? I am. I hope always to be what I have been, and still am, as regards the good cause I have been led to advocate. Every day's experience convinces me how needful it is to be still more devoted, still more persevering in that cause. I knew to what it would lead—what I should have to suffer. I thank God, who has given me strength according to my day, I enjoy good health—never better. I am comfortable. I wish you distinctly to understand that I am treated with respect and kindness by those who have the superintendance of the prison. My wife and children, thank God, are also well. I trust we shall all weather the storm. Give my heart's best love to all, be they few or many, who think of me, and will be glad to hear of me, I often think of you all. You live in my heart; you

have had all I have to give you. I can now only suffer for you and pray for you. God bless yon. Let all who would serve God and benefit their fellow-creatures, read his word and worship him aright. Keep up your religious services steadily and zealously, Whatever else you do, fill your chapels and keep them out of debt. Never mind me; take care of the cause—remember this. You shall soon hear from me again. Farewell. God bless you all. You know I am yours', most faithfully,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

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## HOMELY HINTS TO A PLAIN MAN ON READING, STUDY AND PREACHING.

*The "Castle," Chester, Oct. 9, 1839.*

My dear Sir,—It so happened that I had just written to Hyde, I think the very day your kind letter reached me, or I would have answered it at once. A man in gaol is not troubled with so many friends, that he may afford to slight those, who are considerate enough to send him the news of their neighbourhood, and to enquire affectionately after his welfare. You are a good fellow, Evan; and a Welshman every inch of you. I don't know when I have been better pleased with a letter than I was with yours. I hope you will soon find time to write me another as long, and as full of interesting information. If you wish to hear from me in reply, you must put up with odds and ends of all sorts—scraps of prison-thoughts, as rugged and as dismal as the great ugly building in which they are penned.

You are a plain, homely, honest man, and do not pretend to be any thing more than God and circumstances have made you. But you have a sound mind, a strong understanding and a power of utterance, which, if not very clear in our language, is sufficiently expressive to enable your hearers to gather the meaning you intend to convey. This is quite enough for practical purposes to begin with; but a good deal may be done in the way of improvement, by study and exercise. I recommend you to attend to this by all means. Accustom yourself to think closely upon the most important subjects; use the simplest and most natural language to

convey your thoughts to others, and you will soon acquire ease and readiness both in thought and speech.

Read the works of the best writers. There is no book in the world, even in this respect, better than the bible. You have there heaven-born thought, borne on the winged words of the most eloquent of the human race—upon almost every subject that has ever engaged the attention of mankind. A man, who is at home in the writings of that book, need never be at a loss or be ashamed, when he opens his lips before his fellow-men.

The deficiency of your education or the limited nature of your attainments is no reason why you should hang back, if you are called upon to speak to your neighbours. The great work of “doing good unto all men” requires every variety of talent, and gives full scope to every description of mental and moral quality. The greatest minds may employ their loftiest powers, and find cause for deep humiliation; the smallest may exert their little strength, and have abundant reason to know and rejoice that their labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Go on, as you have begun. Choose those subjects, which the state, circumstances and capacity of your hearers most urgently require, and can most easily comprehend. One great evil of the present system of preaching consists in the mistaken idea ministers entertain of the character and extent of the legitimate topics of pulpit discourse, and of the peculiar method in which those topics should be handled. If the word of God and common sense should guide us in this matter, nothing will then be clearer, than that every thing which is likely to do good to those that hear us, and is most fitting for them in the frame of mind, and in the temporal situation they are in at the time, ought be set before them in the best way we can do it, so as to bring about the end set before us and them, as the great end of the preaching of the gospel amongst men. “Godliness with contentment is great gain. It has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Let the improvement of mankind in soul and body, in timely and everlasting well-being, be the mark at which we aim in our endeavours to instruct them.

You tell me there is a good deal of strife in Hyde and the neighbourhood. Never mind. Let those fall out

that like. Have nothing to do with quarrelsome, spiteful and angry men. Keep more to yourselves. Do the people all the good you can, and if any of them revile you and persecute you, bless them and pray for them. A very little time will put an end to all this wild work. Mere party men may triumph for a while, but their reign will be short. I thank the people of Hyde for the stand they have made against the men who are plotting both against me and them. I shall always be glad to hear from you. Your's, very truly,

J. R. STEPHENS.

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#### GOD ALONE ABIDETH.

A REFLECTION ON VIEWING THE RUINS OF PERSEPOLIS: SEE NIEBUHR'S TRAVELS AS REFERRED TO BY HERDER. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY MR. J. R. STEPHENS.

And kings, where are they, mighty ones of earth ?  
 They only lived until stern destiny  
 Pour'd them the cup of death and bade them drink.  
 How many a kingly city bloomed of old  
 That now is withered ! Death hath swept away  
 The city and the living ones it held,  
 To teach thee, child, that God alone abides.]

Thou wouldest reign a king like Solimann :  
 But where is Solimann ? of all his glory,  
 His wealth and greatness, took he ought away ?  
 Who treads on dust shall dust himself become.  
 Faces, that smiled, look out from every sod  
 Of earth ; thy heedless foot, it may be, treads  
 Even now on sons of kings ! The dust of death  
 Speaks but one eloquent word,—“ Live well.”  
 He, who loves God and goodness, needs no more.

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#### THOUGHTS ON PRISON DISCIPLINE, AND ON SOME SOCIAL AND RELATIVE DUTIES.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I see by the “ Plan” that you are about to renew the public expression of your regard towards me, by making the accustomed quarterly collection for my support, as though I were still labouring amongst you. This is more than I had any right or any reason to expect from you, since I can give you nothing in return for your disinterested kindness, and,

more especially, since I know how most of you are straitened in your own means, and how urgent are the demands made upon your very limited resources for the pressing necessities of your own chapel, Sunday-school, and other funds connected with the religious institutions, which you are so imperatively bound to maintain. I had hoped to have earned bread enough and to spare for myself and those dependant upon me; by my own exertions whilst in this place, but by a most monstrous stretch, or rather violation of, the "Law," I am forbidden to do so. I am not allowed any use of my pen, either for my own benefit or the benefit of the public, as long as I remain in prison. It thus appears that the sentence of an English judge is only a part of the punishment which those who are taken from the bar are doomed to undergo. There is another tribunal—a secret and an irresponsible tribunal, that can do just what they please with a man, the moment he is handed over to their inquisitorial administration. They can stint him of food, even to starvation—they can dress him up in the most degrading costume—they can put him into solitary confinement for a considerable proportion of his whole term of imprisonment—they can virtually impose heavy penalties upon him, against all law, and beyond any possibility of redress, by means of their so called "Rules and Regulations" for the *better* government and discipline of the gaol, in which he is confined. I, amongst many others, have the honour of being a victim to this inhuman, I ought rather to say, this infernal system, though not subject to its harshest discipline. And a high honour, I assure you, I feel it to be. When, for hours, I lie awake every night, in my small, cold, damp, and chilly cell, and feel its clammy air strike into my very bones, I had rather a thousand times be where I am for righteousness' sake, than lie on bed of down, in gilded chamber, and know that thousands had been made wretched that I might live in luxury and splendour. Please God, they shall not hurt me by any of their unnatural regulations. I have a toughish body, that can stand out eighteen months of it, and not feel much the worse for all their "discipline;" and I have a sturdy mind, that only grows the stronger and the stubberner for all such attempts to

break it down. I often think of the many tens of thousands, who are shut up as I am, but in every way under infinitely more trying and afflictive circumstances, in the gaols and workhouses of this *benevolent, merciful* and *pitiful* country ! The little children, fatherless, motherless, friendless,—or, worse than this, their fathers, mothers, and friends alive somewhere or other but dead to them—huddled together in some dreary “Child’s House,” fretting, pining, sickening, dying-off, like untimely blossoms falling from the blighted tree—the widowers—the wedded torn asunder from each other and from their little ones—shivering, palsied age—starved, broken, hopeless manhood : such are some of those who go into these houses of despair, and come out no more, or come out far other than they went in—broken-hearted, spiritless, and indifferent to whatever may befall them, or reckless and full of vengeance towards those that brought them to such a state of distress, disquietude, and misery.

Had my imprisonment no other effect upon me than this, I shall be thankful for it. I *know* what thousands and tens of thousands of my fellow-creatures are suffering, far more intensely than I have to suffer, and without any of the conveniences and comforts which I am privileged to enjoy. Were I to live a thousand years after I leave this place, I should feel it my duty to give, by the most strenuous exertions in my power, full effect to the prayer we so often repeat, that God would be pleased to show his “pity upon all prisoners and captives.”

It would be most ungrateful of me either to reject or lightly to esteem the spontaneous and affectionate tokens of your regard, which it is your determination to offer to me during my continuance in this gaol. On the contrary, I am proud to be connected with a people so generously inclined, however limited their ability; and it is one of the most pleasing of my duties to acknowledge how grateful these expressions of your kindness are to my heart, inasmuch as they bear witness to the mutually disinterested character of the union that has subsisted between us. Had we been toward each other any thing but that which we really have been, these feelings would never have existed at all, much less would they shew themselves in the way they have done. At the

same time, however much your kindness may have contributed to my comfort, and however gratified I may be by the expression of it, I wish you distinctly to understand that I shall be deeply grieved, if your attention to me, in this respect, should occasion any neglect or diminution in your own domestic institutions. First of all, to the best of your power, feed your households; take nothing from them which they stand in need of. I have always enjoined this most strongly upon you. Your own wives and children—aged fathers and mothers—poor kinsfolk and relatives, have the first claim upon you. Do not forget this. Practise it yourselves, and preach it to others. It is a devilish doctrine to teach people to give to this, that or the other, when those belonging to them are not attended to. Next, feed your own poor, look after your sick neighbours, and other lost and forlorn things, that nobody seems to care for. Then look to your chapels, your schools, and other charities. And lastly, if without impoverishing yourselves, or neglecting other more immediate calls upon you, you still feel anxious to testify your love to your absent pastor, do it as you feel disposed, heartily, and he will right heartily rejoice in witnessing your affection and your zeal.

I am glad to see from the "Plan" that my removal has stimulated so many to come forward, and more than make up for my lack of service. I see that both the very old and the very young have rushed forward to stand in the gap occasioned by my absence from you. I thank you for still permitting my name to stand upon your "plan," and at your head, too! The time *will* come; and, if in the meanwhile we are all busily employed in doing good, it will come *soon*, when, as your head, I can once more take my stand, and do my duty amongst you. I hope you will lose no opportunity—each one according to his several ability—of spreading the truth around you far and near. You know how to do this—you can do it. Make the trial—take up the cross—go forth, and God will be with you.

I need not warn you against those, who, I hope thoughtlessly—but, most foolishly would seek to snare you by the formation of *secret* societies for political purposes. You have been better taught than to suffer yourselves to be entrapped into any scheme of this description. But

there may be those about you, who might heedlessly give ear to such deceivers. Tell them from me to beware. I hear there are such amongst you. If so, be on your guard against them. Englishmen should do nothing in the dark. Let all that you have to do with be open and above board. But you shall hear more from me on this subject. The times are growing serious, and will be more so. But in all weathers I am,

Your's very truly,  
JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

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## PARTY AND THE PEOPLE.

*The "Castle," Chester, Nov. 11, 1839.*

DEAR SIR,—You have my best thanks for calling my attention to a paragraph in the *Northern Liberator*, in which I am somewhat roughly handled for an expression I never uttered, and for the contents of a letter of mine which has been made to apply to a subject very far from my thoughts at the time it was penned. You have thought it your duty, as a friend to fair play, to let me know of this attack, and have requested me to explain my reasons for entertaining the opinions I hold on the question referred to. Whether you are a personal friend of mine, or not, I do not know; your name is not familiar to me, though were I to see you face to face, I might recognise in your person one of the many straightforward, independent working men, whom I have been accustomed to see around me when addressing the people of Ashton and its neighbourhood. Your conduct on this occasion shews you, however, to be a lover of the truth—a character in my eyes far more lofty and honourable than that of a mere partizan or devotee of any creed or sect. I presume you are one of the working classes, and if I may judge from one part of your name (Henry Hunt), either a Radical, or the son of a Radical. If I be right in my conjecture, I have the more reason to be proud of your correspondence, because it goes to strengthen my belief in the soundness and strength of understanding possessed by the lowlier but more worthy portion of my fellow-countrymen. It is the common people that all regenerating truth must be

more especially addressed to. It is amongst them, rather than any other part of society, it must strike its deepest roots—amongst them it must grow up and flourish, before it can become, as it is intended, a blessing to all alike. It is a token for good, when men like yourself can see your favourite system attacked—if that must be the word; and give those, who have attacked it, credit for the purity of their motives and the sincerity of their endeavours to benefit their country by such means and ways as they think most likely to bring about the end desired alike by all, who really love their kind. It matters little whether I or my opponents be right, as far as we are individually concerned, provided the people, through our strife, are induced by their own study to bottom the question in dispute, and thus arrive at a thorough knowledge of the truth. For my own part, I am very well content to be branded with any mark of infamy my enemies can burn into my flesh, if those, who see the broad arrow, will for themselves search into and find out the nature of the error I am charged with; and having proved it, go away, and act accordingly. It is my good fortune to be exempt from that kind of vanity, at least, that can be wounded by such attacks as the one you have pointed out to me. I never had any higher ambition than to be allowed to say what I think, when others choose to ask my opinion. In no part of my humble career have I ever said or done anything that could alarm the most fearful of those, who are on the watch for the authors of intrigue, the fomenters of faction, or the aspiring candidates for vacant leadership of the people. Agitation with me has not been a source of gain, but the cause of great loss—the loss of everything but my personal and domestic happiness. Being such as I am, I do not heed the aspersions which, in many instances I hope, have been ignorantly but so profusely heaped upon me.

With the Editors of the *Northern Liberator*, I have no personal quarrel. I have always had a high opinion of their integrity and zeal in the cause of the people. Till I came to this place I was a constant reader of their journal; for their kindness in sending me a copy, of which I felt greatly obliged to them, and constantly recommended it to the poor as one of the staunchest and

most honest advocates of their rights and liberties. The occasional intercourse I have had with its conductors served to raise them in my esteem; and I have had some reason to believe I once stood well in their opinion. What they now say of me and against me shall not influence my mind so as to lead me to disparage them in your estimation. You are welcome to think of me as they have written, if you find them to have written the truth.

I am proud of the noble and generous effort made by the people, rich and poor, but especially the poor on my behalf. There never was a fund more spontaneously, more heroically raised than this by any people—there never was a public man who thought himself more unworthy than he, to whom it has been given. I shall always boast of it, not for its worth as money, but as a proof of what the people always show themselves willing to do for those they love, to the utmost of their power and almost beyond their power. Its amount has been greatly exaggerated; I do not know how much it has reached to—certainly not thousands, I believe only a few hundreds, but, little or much, up to this hour I have never appropriated, with the exception of £150, a single farthing of it, either to my defence or to any other expense I have been put to, in consequence of the prosecution instituted against me. From the first, I left every thing in the hands of my committee, in whose hands the business still remains.

What the reports of my trial have made me say, I do not know, not being allowed to write for the press. I neither prepared nor corrected any report of my speech, nor did I see any until long after my incarceration one of the pamphlet copies was sent to me, which I looked into, but found it so full of errors that I had not patience to read it through. Any thing approaching to a declaration that, "if Universal Suffrage were established in England, my head would be the first to come to the block," or "that the people were ready to take my life on the scaffold," I did not make then nor at any other time. I did say, that I was no Radical, and instanced as a proof of it, what it was I had stated at the Leigh meeting, for which I was originally prosecuted, that "if the Radicals as a party, so far as they stood represented by their

leaders in the House of Commons and out of it, had the power, I should be the first man they would bring to the block." This opinion, and my reasons for entertaining it, I detailed at length to a meeting of the leading men among the working classes at Leigh, and to their satisfaction. I grounded this opinion upon the rancorous spirit of party, which, wherever it exists, pursues with unappeasable malignity all who will not acknowledge and bow to its sway. There never yet has been a party in power, that did not persecute and tyrannize to the utmost of its means. In religion or in politics, it is all one. You must either bend or be broken. Here is the creed—there are the principles, you must subscribe and make open profession of them, or you are denounced and treated as an enemy. I have yet to learn that Radicals are less tenacious of their points than other sectaries, that they attach less importance to them as articles of their political faith—or that they are less fiery in the zeal, with which they pursue those who may conscientiously differ from them. My own experience, in addition to my knowledge of human nature in the abstract, teaches me that in this particular there is no difference. The demon of party is blind, ruthless, and despotic, in its empire over men. I have never yet met with any exception to this general principle, and I never expect to meet with any. But, besides this, I desired my hearers to call to mind my views on the rights of industry, resting on the broad ground of God's word, and taking in the whole range of human interest, and compare them with the views on that question, proposed and acted upon by the leaders of the Radical party, from Brougham down to O'Connell, Leader, Hume, Thompson, and so of the rest. The London Working Man's Association, the Birmingham Council, and many other acknowledged organs of Radical sentiment united with some of the higher names I have mentioned in their endeavour to destroy the influence they believed me to possess with the people. It was not to be borne, that a man, who looked upon the prospective right of the poor labourer to vote as second in importance to his immediate right, under any circumstances, with or without vote, to have enough of all that is needful to his comfort, in exchange for a rea-

sonable amount of labours should be listened to and followed by hundreds of thousands of the people. That a man should openly tell the people how heartily he hated the ballot, and all such sneaking, cowardly, new-fangled "reforms" of our old English hold-up-the-head institutions, and yet be a favourite with them, was too much for a "five point" Radical to endure. So Stephens must be denounced, and he was denounced accordingly. The deadly animosity, with which I was pursued by those men, left me no room to doubt what they would do if they had the power, and if they imagined it necessary to "public liberty," as the phrase goes, I believe, when Democrats prepare to immolate a victim. In these remarks I have always made a distinction between the Radicals as a party led on by party chiefs, and incited by party passions, and the People of England, as a whole, when left to their own unbiassed judgment and common sense. I have seen too much of the warm-hearted and noble-minded conduct of my fellow-countrymen to believe for a moment that they would be capable of any act of deliberate tyranny or vindictive cruelty. But I have also seen too much and read too much of the nature and tendency of party spirit not to tremble for the consequences of a simple and confiding people entrusting their destinies to the working of a raw theory, and the honey-lip professions of ultra-democratic orators. The more generous and unsuspecting the people are, the more liable are they to be deceived and afterwards betrayed.

It is a great mistake to imagine that I deny the right of the poorest to vote as a citizen in the election of his representative. So far from denying this right to any, I insist upon it for all. I am for the free choice of the people in wardmote, and boroughmote, and countymote assembled. I would go back to the days when there were no registration courts, no revising barristers, no electoral lists, no polling in books by law-clerks with their check books and bribery oaths—and, above all, no ballot box; but when the people came to hear the king's writ, and proceeded by a show of hands, and then, if it were necessary, by counting the heads or "polls," to declare on whom their choice had fallen. But, under present circumstances, I do not think that any struggle

about the right or the power to vote is just the thing we want to save the country from destruction. The fact is, that, as a nation, we are altogether out of joint. "The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is nothing but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores." It is not a mere change, transfer, or extension of the right of voting that would put right the many things that are wrong amongst us. One portion of society has forgotten that it is a blasphemous denial of God's righteous sovereignty to decree unrighteous statutes; and another portion of society has forgotten that it is equally a denial of God's providential superintendence to yield obedience to such unholy laws. We have all to learn, afresh and from the beginning, the first principles of government as laid down in the Holy Scriptures. It will then be time enough to talk about the forms and outward shapes of government, when we are agreed as to the spirit which shall animate and guide them.

Such is my opinion. I think we should first be at one amongst ourselves, as to what the law is; and what kind of law ought to be made or obeyed by any men in any state of society, before we propose changes in the institutions of the country, whilst the ideas and habits of its citizens remain unchanged. I would change the mind and manners of men one towards another—that the one should no longer love tyranny; the other be resolved no longer to be slaves. I know this can be done. I will endeavour to aid in effecting it through evil or through good report.

"Monstrous" and "incredible" it might well appear to the Editors of the *Northern Liberator*, for me to say "that the people were ready to take my life upon the scaffold." Is it not quite as monstrous—quite as incredible—quite as indicative of "an utter want of principle" for these editors to take the "life" of my reputation away, as far as their power extends, on the strength of a single expression from a private letter to a friend, referring to a very different subject to the one now in question. The editors are wrong in stating that I have "come out with a letter," &c. That letter was not written for the press. I had no idea it would have found its way to the public eye, much less that it would have been

deemed worthy of such especial notice by Radical journalists. I am sneered at for praising the good treatment I receive in Chester Castle. I have not the letter by me. I keep no copies of such things; but as far as my memory serves me all that I said was, that "as gaols went this was one of the best; and that those who had anything to do with us, from the Governor downwards, treated us with civility and kindness." And is even this an offence? If so, I will repeat it. I have no wish to stick my sufferings in the eyes of the public, or to exasperate the feelings of my friends unnecessarily on my account. I, therefore, begged the friend to whom I wrote, in that or some other letter, to contradict the rumours that I heard were afloat respecting the harsh and cruel treatment to which I was subjected. I thought it only just to the authorities here that these reports should be contradicted, and that my friends should be easy and contented about me. If this be praising the "good treatment" of a goal, and be a crime in me, I cannot help it, nor can I promise to amend. The "darling schemes" of the people, which I spoke of opposing, were not the right of the citizen to vote, but the awful delusions of the "National Convention;" such for instance, as the "Holiday," which has filled the gaols of the country with innocent and deluded victims, and the consequences of which, it is to be feared, are not at an end, and will not stop at the dungeon or the grate. How was it that the "Convention" should have persisted to the very last in recommending that "darling scheme," when, individually, they acknowledged its impracticability, and the danger attending it? Where was the "*Northern Star*," where the "*Northern Liberator*," to warn the people against the moon-struck madness of such a "Scheme?" Week after week I looked for these Radical and Chartist organs to save the people from destruction, but in vain. At the hazard of my life I withstood the people to their face, and bade them beware of that fatal "Holiday." I could only warn them in general terms. I knew more about than I chose to tell them, but I told them quite enough to explain my meaning; and though I gained hatred and curses, both loud and deep, I saved my own neighbourhood at least from much confusion, perhaps from much burning and bloodshed. Nor was it the first time I have withstood the

people to their face. Should there be a cause for it again, I hope I shall have courage to do it once more, heedless of what may follow. I have written much more than I intended ; if, however, what I have hastily thrown together have the effect I wish it to have, of leading you to examine and reflect upon the important subjects glanced at in this letter, I shall not regret the length to which it has extended. From the style of your communication I should take you to be a young man. If this be so, allow me to impress upon your mind, and upon the minds of such of your friends as you may read this answer to, the importance of investigating every question thoroughly, and of judging for yourself. I am proud to have it to say that no man from the neighbourhood where I have lived so long, who has been in the habit of hearing me, has ever called upon me to defend myself against the charge of tergiversation or inconsistency. Had the Editors of the "*Northern Liberator*" heard me as often as you most likely have, they would not, at one fell swoop, have classed Joseph Rayner Stephens and Daniel O'Connell in the same category. But it is all right—it will work for good. Time tells the truest tale—they are not always the worst men, who have a mind of their own, and are not afraid to tell it when opportunity serves and occasion requires it. If there be any point in this general notice of the paragraph you have referred me to I have lost sight of or not treated so fully as you could wish, let me know and I will endeavour to supply the omission. It will always give me pleasure to endeavour to satisfy the mind of men like yourself. Though I have not learned to flatter, I have a wish to please all men for their good to edification. I will thank you to remember me respectfully to your friends, Radicals, or Chartists, or whatever they may be called. I hope the time will soon come when these distinctions will all be done away with, and when we shall have less disputation and debate, and in their stead more good neighbourhood and brotherly love.

I have the honour to remain, Dear Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

To Mr. Henry James Hunt Brookes, care of Mr. John Broadbent, Stamford-Street, Ashton.

LETTER FROM RICHARD OASTLER, ESQ.,  
ON THE POOR-LAW AND RURAL POLICE.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE THE MARQUIS OF NORMANBY,  
HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

MY LORD,—Before I proceed with my narrative, I wish to have a few *plain words* with you, on subjects which, if they do not concern your lordship, are, at this moment, of the deepest concernment to her Majesty, and to every person of every party, sect, and grade, who holds allegiance to her royal person.

The time for slumber is gone by; if the Queen's marriage-bed is not to be one of thorns, the whole gang of traitors by whom she is now surrounded, must be made to feel that they have other duties than to create universal confusion, and receive their quarter's pay. Hitherto *mischief* has been their *business*, and the *life's blood* of the people has been their *reward*. Listen, then, my lord, to the few *plain words* now about to be addressed to you, by one, whom you must *hate*, because you have injured him. Bear in mind, all the while you read this letter, that it is from him, whose stolen papers you still dare to hold. Read over those papers once more, and ask yourself—Would the people of this country have now to suffer hunger and destitution, the army and nobles degradation, and the Queen herself the revilings of her loyal subjects, if the means, proposed in those papers, had been adopted? My lord, your conscience, *if you have one*, will, I am sure, answer—no!

But to my work; I have little space, yet I have much to say.

First, about the accursed new poor-law. It has now had a “fair trial.” Look back, my lord, to all I have long since prognosticated, with respect to the *effects* of this law of devils, and say if, in any single instance, I have failed to forewarn in the language of truth? I said that it would degrade the nobles, ruin the bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and shopkeepers, and that it would brutalize the labourers. I told you that the army would not enforce it, and that you would be com-

elled to cover the face of England with a detestable army of Bourbon police, who would *eat up* the very *property* which they were hired to *protect*. See, my lord, if every word which I have spoken is not now proved to be true.

What are our nobles *now*? The sons of sires whose veins *were* warmed with the best blood of England—*now* feel the chilly current of the miser, benumbing every principle of patriotism, and freezing those hearts which should always beat to bless the labourers and the poor! The *fathers* of England have, under the accursed “liberal and enlightened principles” of Satan, become the *OPPRESSORS of the WIDOWS, the fatherless, the aged, and the poor!*

Behold, my lord, in one county, a DUKE, cheating a poor old man of ninety out of his parish pay! In another, a DUKE, *tasting, measuring, and weighing* the *unnourishing* diet which avarice awards to the deserving poor! Tasting, measuring, and weighing it—for the sole purpose of extracting a portion, which he may deem super-abundant; and, after all, hear that DUKE call this conduct—CHARITY! Turn to another county, and you will behold an EARL, universally and *deservedly CURSED* by the poor, because he is found guilty of cheating the poor widows out of three-pence a-week of their relief, and absolutely ordering the labourers’ low wages to be reduced a shilling a-week, *if there be a fall of three-pence in the price of flour!* Thus absolutely forcing the labourers to *implore* the millers and bakers *not to reduce the price of bread!* See again, my lord, in another county, an EARL absolutely turning out poor aged widows from his own fields, *because they were gleaning there!* *Although pigs had already been, for days, feasting on what the reapers had left!* Watch this ignoble EARL summoning these poor widows before a bench of magistrates, *and then sitting as one of them himself*; and never blushing, when the honest old widow gleaner told the bench of justices, before his lordship’s face, that “*she had gleaned there unmolested for forty years!*” I have not room for more about our nobles, else I could fill a newspaper with recitals of such disgraceful deeds as these, *perpetrated* by the wearers of coronets! Blush, England, to see thy nobles thus employed! No wonder,

my lord, that this *noble* patron of pigs, should next move for the establishment of the rural police, to uphold such oppression as this ! Let the recreant Earl remember, that the police will “glean” more than the widows—and also that the widows’ prayers were a better safeguard for his life and property, than their curses and the rural police will ever be. My lord, I know one aristocrat, who is now anxious to reside in the long-for-saken hall of his forefathers. He dare not go there, because, he says, if he were, he should be murdered ! He is a warm supporter of the damnable new poor-law, and is terrified at the thoughts of meeting the ghost of his father, should he now inhabit the mansion, which was formerly blessed by the old English benevolence and hospitality of his revered sire.

Truly, my lord, the best blood of England is now tainted with Satan’s leprosy—covetousness !

Behold, my lord, the inhuman conduct of boards of guardians throughout the land—backing the nobles in their oppression of the poor—refusing to husbands the solace of their wives—and to children the protection of their parents ! See every where poverty more cruelly punished than vice. Take the inhuman and barbarous examples of the “liberal and enlightened” board of the YORK union, which, the other day, refused to grant the poor paupers the self-same indulgence which the magistrates had ordered for the felons condemned to hard labour—a shed to work in ! Mark that poor widow who is drowning herself in the parson’s pond—that wife throwing herself out of the bastile window—and that host of poor seduced girls hurrying to self-destruction ! all because of the horrible cruelties of that law of fiends. Turn also to that group of innocent, ragged, shivering, stunted, care-worn children—they are the rising generation of England ! Sprung from the loins of *free-born* Britons ! Mark their employment—they are feeding on what the pigs have left !

Take a survey of your labourers ; mark the sullen, *but determined*, cast of countenance which now darkens their faces ! Note down, if you can, the endless depredations which they now commit, until prosecutors can scarcely be found ; nay, in some parishes, until a kind of agreement is entered into, that, “ if they will be content to

steal one sheep a-week only, nothing shall be said." Do not forget to notice the thoughtful mien of that host of soldiers—they are watching the police feasting on "beef, pork, mutton, and veal," and moistening their sleek carcases with large potations of "heavy." The soldiers are brooding over their own scanty supply at "mess"—"and the washings," on which their wives and children are *wasting*, instead of feeding, despite their utmost care and frugality! Look twice at them, my lord—the sight will do you good—before you turn to the council table, where traitors are plotting treason against the liberty of Englishmen, whilst the betrayed Monarch, lovely and innocent, is persuaded, "that her marriage will set all right!"

My lord, this is a true picture of England, cursed as she is, by the iron sway of "liberal and enlightened philosophy!" Those famishing babes, above referred to, are the descendants of sires "of the poorer sort," who, in the dark days of the *tyrant* HENRY VIII., were, by act of Parliament, declared to be "*feeding on BEEF, PORK, MUTTON, and VEAL.*" Read the act I allude to, (24th *Henry VIII.*, ch. 3rd,) read it at the council-board, in the Queen's presence, *before* her marriage—and blush, to let your royal mistress know, that the *tyrant* HENRY passed *that* act, to keep down the prices of *beef, pork, mutton, and veal*, so that, "the poorer sort," might be enabled to buy plenty, and continue to feed thereon;—blush, I say, when the Queen is forced to compare *that tyrant's* deeds with *yours*. HE passed a law to enable "the poorer sort" to live on the best sort of food, whilst you, having made a law "*to force the people of England to live on a coarser sort of food*," are now employing the British army to compel the people to submit to it; and finding that *force* to be unwilling or insufficient, you are at this moment engaged in "*destroying the freedom of England*" (these are Russell's own words), by a standing army of police!—Blush, monsters! Blush! We were solemnly assured that the new poor-law would improve the condition and elevate the character of the labourers. I was then laughed at, when I prognosticated that it would make the industrious, idle; the honest, knaves! My lord, you have made the trial; and despite the *LIES* of the Commissioners, your *calendars*, your *prisons*, your *fears* and your *police*, ALL unite in PROVING, that *all I*

*said was true.* Once more, I solemnly warn you to desist. You cannot *afford* a longer trial!

Look at the rottenness of your whole system ; hear the complainings of your bankers ; see the shakings of your merchants ; mark the crash amongst your manufacturers ; watch, how your shopkeepers tremble. Yes, my lord, notice all these “signs of the times,” and say, will an army of rural police cure them ! Infatuated Liberals ! The rural police must add to the misery—must rob you of your last shilling—must make the labourers into assassins !—for all this, a rural police is the only medicine yet prescribed by the “liberal and enlightened” traitors, to whose hands the destinies of England are now committed ! My space warns me to be brief. I had intended saying a few plain words about the *different* modes of treatment, in *different* prisons, for persons sentenced for the *same* crime, to the *same* punishment. About the Welsh insurrection (?). About the refusal of *Mr. Frost's* papers. The Queen's marriage, too, I had intended to notice. I must, however, now conclude ; next week I will say something about all these matters, and then, begin the new year with the continuation of my own narrative.

I am, my lord, your lordship's obedient servant,  
RICHARD OASTLER.

8, Rawstorne-street, Brompton, Middlesex,

Dec. 18, 1839.

P.S.—One word about the *London* special jury cause,  
<sup>1</sup>—“THORNHILL *v.* OASTLER.” It was fixed for Saturday last, but, as usual—’twas no go. Mr. Thornhill's Welsh attorney, HUGH THOMAS, withdrew the Record on Thursday ; because, as he said, one of the witnesses was sick. More pity—I am sorry for it. But, my lord, it is rather “too bad” that a *rich* aristocrat should have the power thus to bother a *poor* turned-off steward. Law is very costly, my lord ; this is the third or fourth time that I have been obliged to visit London about this action. Twice the day has been fixed by the Court—I *have always been ready*, and yet, the lawyers tell me, I cannot claim any expenses—perhaps not—but, if 'Squire Thornhill had one drop of his father's blood now warming his veins, he would *scorn* to treat a cast-off servant thus. Next term, I expect, that *Hugh Thomas* will have a

shaking fit, and be sick. The term after, the fat old woman, who manages in his house, (and who, I hear, is a very useful personage in the office,) may, for aught I know, be seized with the shivers—so, we shall thus jog on to this time twelve months; when, I fear, that the dear little Fixby heiress will have been disinherited, and the old 'Squire will have resumed his senses. Had he (Thornhill) not been *frightened* of a Yorkshire jury, all would have been settled last March!—Sure enough, this is the old 'squire's birth-day. My thoughts are at Riddlesworth, amongst the merry throng.—No; they are in the middle aisle of the parish-church of Riddlesworth! Bad luck to you, old 'squire. My lord, I intend no harm, he knows what I mean, and so do his children. Believe me, I am, after all, the happier man of the two.

R. O.

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### A PRAYER;

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY J. R. STEPHENS.

#### I.

Thine, Lord, to live and thine to die,  
For ever, Father, thine to be;  
And even in heaven to draw nigh  
Nearer and nearer unto Thee;  
To close mine eyes without a tear,  
To pass through death yet nothing fear:  
For this I pray, for this I pine,  
For ever, Father, to be thine!

#### II.

Be this my care, my anxious strife,  
That, free from sin and full of faith,  
I here may live a spotless life,  
And sleep in Thee the sleep of death.  
In darkness then be thou my light,  
In weakness ever be my might;  
That I may always faithful prove,  
Submissive serve and thankful love.]

## III.

Oh ! what a happiness is this !  
 Oh ! can I claim it as my own ?  
 In virtue's path, with holy bliss,  
 Through death to grasp the starry crown,  
 And still to preach to all that come,  
 Seeking their long-lost heavenly home,  
 Show them how Christians live, and rise  
 Through the dark grave to Paradise.

## IV.

Grant, oh ! my God, that I may press  
 Towards this my calling ! mark and prize  
 A monument of holiness,  
 To guide my brethren to the skies ;  
 The sinner warn and then allure,  
 To make his soul's salvation sure,  
 To seek the mansions of the blest,  
 Where all, who love thee, find their rest.

# STEPHENS' MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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FEBRUARY, 1840.

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## TOKENS AND TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES;

WITH A GLANCE AT THE ONLY REMEDY FOR THE WIDESPREAD  
EVIL THAT THREATENS TO OVERWHELM US.

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A work is going on, which the mighty men of this world know but little of. Behind, or rather underneath, the outward things that engage the attention of the statesman or excite the energies of the political patriot, there is a something in itself weightier than all of them together, and in its consequences more influential than all other principles besides—and that is, the slow, still growth of the seed of the word of God; less indeed, when dropped into the soil than a grain of mustard seed, but, in the end, destined to cover the whole field, which field is the world. Whilst we are wondering at the strange sights that come before us, and the stranger changes that pass upon us, that leave us far other than once we were—sights and changes that make all the shiftings of the earth, from spring to winter, from the flower to the faded leaf, seem scarce worthy to point the moral or adorn the tale of our fleeting fortunes—whilst we are hurrying to and fro, full of the thoughts, and big with the business, of this life—whilst we are pushing, jostling and thrusting one another—each thinking his own things greater and better than the things of his neighbour—whilst all is laughter upon the playground of our childhood—all bustle at the market of the chapman and the exchange of the merchant—whilst all is din on the field of fight,

glitter at the court, intrigue in the cabinet and selfishness in the senate-house itself; behind or underneath, or in the very midst of all this, you may nevertheless behold the leaven of truth and goodness, of righteousness and love, that has yet to leaven the whole lump.

We are steadfast in the trust we have towards God. We cannot be moved away from it. We know Him to be greater than man. We feel Him to be good. We hope for and yearn after things that are not seen as yet; well aware that our hope shall not be cut off, though for a time it may be delayed. *The day will come*—the day of God's power—of man's bettering, and of the earth's renewal. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. This trust in God we hold to be the ground and the beginning of all true and wholesome political economy. It is not yet acknowledged as one of the *Principia* in our schools of civic science; but it will be—it must be. We will preach it. We will never lay down the pen (so long as we have head and hand-power to guide it as we would), until we find it the allowed and the inwoven opinion, that the knowledge of the only true God, and of the Christ whom he has sent, is the stirring, starting power-stroke of an endless life; the only thing that can be called life: a healthsome, blooming, rose-like and undying life; a life that is one and the same in our hearts, in our homes, in our towns, in our institutions, in our forms of government, the breath of lives that shall be blown into the nostrils of a dead world, until at length the angel shall proclaim in heaven, “The kingdoms of this world—this our dark and sin-stricken world—are become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.”

We have all much to learn on this head. We must be made to hear what God the Lord is pleased to speak to men, or we shall never learn wisdom. How is it—how comes it—how can it be, that any reference to heavenly principles or purposes or powers is sure to bring down the sneer of the dark scowler, the mocking gibe of the silly scorner or the idiot laughter of the madman and the fool upon the man who has the christian courage to declare himself the advocate of the truth of Jesus Christ. Go into the imperial senate: there are Lords Spiritual and Lords Temporal, and besides them more than six hundred of the chosen of the land; all

these men are the *representatives* (we cannot hide it, we cannot make it otherwise, it is so), they are the representatives of the country: they stand in the stead of us all. We all live, move and have our being in them. They are the barometers of every species of character and feeling of the nation. We firmly believe, and we frankly own, that they constitute a very fair sample or average of the religious knowledge, principle and practice of the majority of our increasing population. Should any one deny it, let him give his reasons for so doing, and we are prepared to answer him. But we take it that it is so. Now, this being given, what and where are we, as a so-called, a self-styled Christian people? By the fruit we may tell the tree. Then let us pluck the ripened growth, and say whose husbandry it is. Knows any man the time when princes and nobles walked foremost, ay, ran far ahead of the giddy crowd in the ways of all kinds of evil; when the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life rode royally in the ascendant of our social hemisphere? Was there ever such a time in the memory of the living or in the chronicles of the departed? You blush the answer, and we will allow the crimson space to cool and to give back the bronze, whilst we ask again—where the while was the man of God, the ermined peer or the purpled priest, the mitred prelate or the crested baron—where was there found a man to stand up and speak out the truth? The startling echo answers where, as it moans on the heavy air of this dreary valley of dry bones. Nay, more; the sin of Saul has been in the court; the sin of Achan has been in the camp; the sin of Sodom has soiled the very altar; and—and there was silence there and every where around.

Are things much better in the people's house? Who will undertake to answer for the men of their “unbought” suffrages, the patriots who have paraded their disinterestedness and love of country upon the hustings and along the crowded streets? Once more we say, pluck off the fruit and carry it to your lips—what is it? the juicy grape from the vinetree, or the husky haw from the thornbush? the heavy fig of the garden, or the light thistledown of the heath? You shall determine for yourselves. Only refer us to a single measure in which

the principles of truth and goodness are set forth in the preamble, and in which the happiness of the many of mankind is sought after and secured, because it is their right to possess it, and our duty to procure it and promote it. Point us to a single debate in which the oppression of the poor, the tyranny of the despot, the peculation of the privileged plunderer, specially of that most privileged and most abhorred of all plunderers the priest: the inequality of the public burthens, the want of room, the want of work, the want of fair wages, the want of cheap and wholesome bread, the want of knowledge, the scantiness of all sorts of convenience and comfort and enjoyment, so far as these things relate to the poor, to the bulk of the free-born children of a once free and happy land—point us to a debate in which these things have been denounced on the ground of God's law, Christ's Gospel and man's imperishable right. We ask; but you cannot answer. The people perish, and no man regardeth it. We are not writing at random. We have given ourselves some trouble to come at the truth, and have looked at it on every side, and in every light, in which it can be viewed. And we seriously, deliberately, solemnly charge our national character with the absence, or, at least, with the woful lack of, that principle, which alone can warm into life and nourish and mature the good seed of kindly and happy institutions. The fear of the Lord is not the *beginning* of our legislative wisdom, nor is the glory of the Lord the *end* of our collective and concentrated counseils. If it were so, there would be more peace upon earth, more goodwill amongst our fellow-men. But having attentively considered the bearing and results of the manifold measures of successive Administrations; having narrowly watched and looked into the inward structure of these measures; having marked the going out and the coming in of the men who have devised them; having, besides, gathered together, from every accessible source, the secret history of public proceedings, and striven to analyse and make ourselves masters of the whole; we have come to the conclusion stated above, willing, even yet, to be set right, if we can be shown to be wrong.

Nor let us be in any thing misunderstood. We know too much of the world—of the many who constitute its

machinery, as well as of the few who give direction to its complicated movements, not to be able to point to some who are as good as they are great,—as lowly in heart as they are stalwart in deed,—as perfect before God as they are patriotic before their countrymen, in whose service and for whose welfare they are sincere, energetic and indefatigable. Thank God, there is no large space of the land without some such men as these. But they are as intermediate lights in the surrounding darkness—the very leaven of which we spake, which has been hidden in the mass of meal. Our complaint or rather our assertion is, that the aggregate of pious principle, scattered abroad amongst us, is not large enough to give any thing approaching to the *tone*, the *character*, the *likeness* of high and lofty thought, right feeling and God-like love to man. Where in our cabinets or councils are we to look for truth in her undecked loveliness ? for reason in her mild but unawed majesty ? for righteousness in her decent and becoming dignity ? truth, reason and righteousness, the three-one birthpower of all that amongst men is good and indestructible ? The world, we fear, is yet in the “wicked one.” And the love of the Father is not in them, that love and live according to the ways of such a world.

Why have we laid open the hidden springs of our political economy ? Because we are disposed to croak or rail or forebode nothing but evil ? because we are determined to find fault with every thing, to be satisfied with nothing, to disparage the wisdom or the goodness of all who are above us, and ungenerously deprecate, or cynically sneer at, the efforts they are making to advance the common weal ? We hope it is not so. We would not hastily or uncharitably judge, lest we ourselves be judged in like manner, and have measured to ourselves the hard measure we have meted out to others. In what has been advanced we have an object. Our design is to awaken and then direct the attention of every well-wisher to his kind to the true state of our national concerns. We would warn him away from the broken cisterns of a fusionless philosophy, which can hold no water, and would then lead the parched and thirsty lip to the upper and the nether springs, whence only flow the fresh and untroubled streams of health and happiness. We wish

to show that there is a much nearer and a much better way to the good we all profess to be striving after, than the oft-trodden bye-paths of "expediency," or the newly-laid high-road of "utility," the legislation that will have an immediate and apparent *cui-bono* in every thing, and then dreams itself into the fallacious idea that it has thereby secured the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" of the citizens at large. To fear God and do His bidding is the first, last, easiest law of love, which whosoever keeps is himself holier, and is the means of making others happier. The book of the earth's mysterious story is before us ; and, open it where we will, the same tokens stand out upon the page. The nations that have not feared God have been destroyed, whilst the people whose God has been the Lord, have flourished and become lovely as a garden. No reform can either be sound or wholesome or lasting that is not begun and carried on in truth and righteousness. With what we have, we are content ; for what we enjoy, we are thankful ; for what is held out to our reasonable expectations, we hope ; but, at the same time, we would that the general mind should be watered and refreshed by the great truths we have referred to. We would that ourselves and others should become more simple, more sincere, more generous and disinterested in our benevolence ; we would that we should all think more of the healing and invigorating principles that lie concealed within the garish outside of our greatness and skill : that we should all work more as though we really believed in the doctrines we profess to hold : and trust more to the power and goodness of Him, whose blessing maketh rich and addeth no sorrow where it comes down and dwells.

We want a religious reformation ; a change for the better in the thoughts, the feelings, the whole inward being of the people, ourselves, our sons and our daughters, our man-servant and our maid-servant and the stranger that is within our gates. By a religious reformation we do not mean such a change as that which happened three hundred years ago, or such a change as that which the sectarian calls conversion ; but a thorough renewal of the national mind and heart, such as God alone by his truth can bring about. He can do this ; and, therefore, we hope and pray that He will begin it now.

A glance at what is called the outward church, or in present parlance the “religious world,” will show how far we coincide in the theology, and sympathise in the ostensible and ostentatious objects of the rival interests, that are striving with each other for the mastery; toiling and panting to reach the goal of their unsanctified ambition, the ascendancy of their own form of faith, and the supremacy of power it would give them over the souls and bodies of mankind. For the present we pause.

J. R. S.

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## THE TRUTH IS FREE, THOUGH THEY THAT TOLD IT MAY BE BOUND.

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You must not think I had forgotten you because you did not hear from me sooner. I wished the noise and din of tongues to die away before I wrote to you. By this time, I hope, all is still again, though perhaps no town in England was less likely to be shaken than Staleybridge. You have been so long accustomed to go steadily on, minding your own business, that I am persuaded you would be but little affected by all that has recently transpired. You were, all of you, fully prepared for what has taken place. I had so often told you it would end in this way, that you could not be surprised to find it did so. It would never do to allow a man like me to be at large, spreading the truth abroad from one end of the land to the other. Where was the word of God ever suffered to be freely, fully, and boldly spoken without rebuke? You read the Bible, and you learn from it that as soon as the craft is in danger, those who bring it into danger must answer for what they have done. It has been so from the beginning. It will be so to the end. But what then? Are we friends of the truth—followers of Him, who came to make it known to the world, and can we not, for the truth's sake, and for His sake, suffer the loss of our wordly goods, of our freedom, and even of our life, if it be His will that we should bear the cross. To be where I now am, for what I have done in behalf of my poor countrymen, I deem the highest honour ever conferred upon me. I have not had an unhappy moment or one uneasy

thought since I came within these walls. My conscience bears me witness that I have never sought anything but the good of all, upon the principles of eternal truth and righteousness. I bear no illwill to the men who have sent me here. I pity them, and for a thousand worlds would not change places with any of them. They little know how vain and futile their efforts are. They think they have done wonders to send Stephens to gaol. But can they imprison the truths Stephens has been preaching? Ten thousand times ten thousand voices answer "No!" These truths are written on the mind, are graven on the heart, and cannot be erased. I cease not to thank God for giving me time and strength to make known his word amongst you. I shall now see whether my hope will not be realized, in finding the work go on as well without me, as it used to do when I was with you. If every one, who has the cause of God at heart, will act as though all depended upon himself, thousands will embrace the truth for every one who now professes it. I repose great confidence in you. I have known you and tried you for many years. Our connexion with each other has been a most happy one. Others may say what they please about the fickleness of the people. My experience leads me to say that the people are faithful and true-hearted to those, whom they have thoroughly known and can trust. As for those sudden squalls that sometimes blow so hard, why we ought to look out for them, and make ready against they come. They soon pass over and are gone. They are not worth talking about. The man, that steers a steady course, will not heed a surly blast or two. The haven is before him and he will outride every storm. I can very well afford to bear the senseless calumnies of weak or wicked men. Let them talk themselves out of breath. In seventeen months it will be my turn to speak. I can wait till then.

Give my love to all. Tell them I am well. I have not enjoyed such good health this long while. I wish you distinctly to understand that I am treated with great kindness by those who have the superintendence of this prison. It is but right that this should be widely known. Contradict all silly rumours to the contrary, on my authority. Of course there are many inconveniences

and annoyances in a place like this, but that is the fault of the present system of prison discipline, and not of the persons whose duty it is to enforce the regulations of the gaol.

I hope the chapel continues to be well attended, and that your preachers are meek as the dove and bold as the lion in proclaiming the truths of the gospel. Preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season. Improve every opportunity. Redeem the time. Live to God. Do good unto all men. Forget not the poor—the needy—the helpless—the widow and the fatherless. I cannot work. But I *can* suffer. In due time I hope to be with you again, stronger in body and more earnest in spirit than ever. In Chester Gaol as in Staleybridge pulpit, I am yours, most faithfully, J. R. S.

*The "Castle," Chester, Sep. 13, 1839.*

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TWO STANZAS OF A HYMN:—

(*From the Swedish,*)

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

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I.

How vast the thought and yet how sweet,  
That every where dwells God the Lord  
Not only where the star-beams meet,  
Or thunders roll His awful word,  
But in the night He me surroundeth,  
And in the day His light appears ;  
On every breeze His mercy soundeth,  
From every waterspring he cheers :  
In all that is—all that can be—  
'Tis Him I hear—'tis Him I see.

II.

Oh, God ! I live alone in Thee,  
By Thee alone I onward move ;  
Thy father-hand wayleadeth me  
Through time's rough paths to realms above.  
Trusting to Thee in hope I rest  
Even in the dark grave's cold embrace,  
Till, called by name, at thy behest  
I wake, and see Thee face to face ;  
Thee, Father, then for evermore  
Thee I shall see and Thee adore !

## ADVICE TO ONE ABOUT TO BE TRIED FOR THE SEDITION OF PLEADING FOR THE POOR.

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I cannot say I was sorry when I heard you had been pounced upon by the bloodthirsty, christian "Reformers," as a fit victim to be thrown upon the already reeking altar of "civil and religious liberty." It is well that such men as you should be chosen for the sacrifice. The real object and design of these prosecutions is best seen in the known character and conduct of the individuals who have been hunted down by them already, and of those whom they still pursue with such deadly hatred. The generality of these imprisoned and banished men are the best workers, the best neighbours and the most upright in all things amongst the inhabitants of the towns and villages whence they have been taken; men, who, besides fulfilling the private and social duties of their station in life, were given to reading and thought on the subjects, which, as men and citizens, it is most important for them to be thoroughly acquainted with. But more than this—many of these men are sincere and genuine Christians. What they knew and taught they learnt in the word of God. The righteous and lovely laws of heaven were written on their hearts, and, being thereto stirred of God, they took up their cross, and boldly made known the truth to their brethren and fellow countrymen. They cried aloud against the evils which they beheld everywhere around them, and did not spare the evil-doer, because he happened to be rich and great, and high and lifted up. Nay, they thought and therefore said, that this only enhanced his guilt and would increase his punishment; for he, to whom much has been given, must answer for what he has received—the higher he has been raised in opportunity, privilege and means above his fellows, the deeper will he be plunged into the pit of perdition if he convert these instruments of good into scourges of wrong and wretchedness to his poorer brethren, whom he ought to help and bless. For speaking out these homely truths in the ears of the wealthy, the powerful and the proud, these men of God have been followed by every kind of persecution. All the shapes that coward guilt could take have been put on,

the more readily and the more effectually to accomplish their destruction. When it was found that they were proof against the shafts of social vengeance, that they could bear to have their names cast out as evil, to be reckoned as the filth and off-scouring of all things—that they could suffer the loss of their wordly goods, and be content to have their daily bread clutched out of their feeble hands, to be chased from town to town by these hunters of men—when they were seen to bear manfully up against these swelling waves of the wrath of the wicked, it was then found necessary to make use of the forms of law for the purpose of consigning them to the gaol and the gibbet. The transport ship, the prison and the scaffold, now await the man, be he who he may, that dares to speak as God has bidden him to speak. England is no longer the land of freedom, because she has ceased to be the land where the truth is told, and where righteousness is upheld. Innumerable will be the pretended reasons for putting down that which they call sedition. The name of peace, of law, of order, of good government and of religion will all be invoked for the purpose of creating prejudice against those whom it is intended to crush. Innumerable likewise will be the forms, which the pent-up spirit of dissatisfaction occasioned by misrule will assume—some of them hideous and fearful. But however these outward shapes may shift and change about—and however wide our interests or our passions may carry us from the real point at issue—come at length it will—*the crisis, the collision, the catastrophe.* You and your friends with the rest of us are only links in the chain. The animosity and malignity with which we are pursued is the natural result of the course, which tyranny has taken; whilst the patience, with which we bear our sufferings, and the steadfastness, with which we still persevere, even to the death, should we be called thereto, will, more than any thing else, give stability, growth and prevalence to the truth, for the sake of which we have shown ourselves willing to be offered up.

All parties have yet much to learn. It is so long since injustice and oppression were fairly encountered by the broad and uncompromising principles of eternal truth and righteousness, that we ought not to wonder when

we see how the father of evil roars and rages against those who have thus encountered him. It is so long since Christianity was wielded against these powers of darkness, according to its original institution and appointment, and its professors persecuted in consequence of their fidelity to the truth, that we need not wonder if, on the first onslaught, they stagger and give way. But the battle once begun in right good earnest, the hardy soldiers of Christ will be found to rally. They will gain the ground they lost, and make steady advances upon their foe. They will, eventually, perhaps through blood, beat back the hosts of the wicked, and will go on from one conquest to another until the victory be obtained, and there be peace established upon the earth, and good-will prevail amongst mankind. This, however, will be a work of time. It may take, it most likely will take, many, many years before this great end of our hopes, our prayers and our manifold labours be achieved. In the mean while many will be aimed at—many will be smitten—many will be struck down, who strive to bring about the reign of right, of truth, of brotherly love. Happy they who are counted worthy to suffer—thrice happy who endure the cross and despise the shame for the sake of the good they do here and the reward they will obtain hereafter. I trust, my dear sir, you are fully prepared for all that lies before you. You know the goodness of the cause and the power of the truth, whose minister you are. The strength of God is theirs who put their trust in him.

Make up your mind to be held guilty. You *are* guilty; for you have spoken the truth as it ought to be spoken in behalf of the poor and needy against those who weigh them down with burdens too heavy to be borne. You will have to suffer for this. It is a sin not to be forgiven. Those, who commit this crime must be crushed. Light and darkness are struggling for the mastery. Christ and Belial, God and Mammon strive together. It is an awful strife. Satan will wound the Saviour's heel, but yet a little while and the Saviour will crush the adversary's head. He will tread down Satan under his feet.

I advise you to plead for yourself. Take your stand upon christian grounds. Argue from the original prin-

ciples of law, from the unchangeable principles of religion. Say what you have done and why you have done it. Tell them you welcome bonds, aye and the grave itself, if these await you for having told the truth. Whether you are a Chartist, or not, I do not know ; nor do I care. You have the same right to be a Chartist that another man has to be a Tory or a Whig. Chartism is one theory amongst many proposed as a solution of the difficult problem of the best and most effectual way to obtain and secure the happiness of the people. I think it a fallacious scheme, but that is neither here nor there. If you are a Chartist give your reasons for being one, manfully and fearlessly. But above all, as a Christian make known to the world the strong ground for the hope that is in you. It is in your character of christian minister that you are most of all to insist upon your right to speak the truth—upon your bounden duty to speak the truth. A plain, straightforward, seriously argued and earnestly pronounced defence of this kind will do more good to the cause you love than all the eloquence of all the pleaders at the bar. Never forget—never once lose sight of the fact, that you are persecuted because you love the good laws of God more than you fear the wicked laws of man. Be of good courage. You are in good hands. He will keep you—the same Almighty keeper who has shown himself the friend and helper of the righteous in all ages. You have time enough before you to prepare a telling defence. Work at it like a man. Do your duty and God will bless you. I advise every other political victim, as well as yourself, to defend himself. Be not afraid of a gaol. I hope to see every gaol in the country constantly filled with devoted men, who succeed each other in enduring the rigours of imprisonment, until their sufferings on the one hand, and the tyranny of their pursuers on the other, shall have thoroughly aroused the nation from its slumbers. When the country is broad awake oppression will give way, and justice will prevail. The banner beneath which we fight, is “God and our Rights.” Nothing can stand before it. Onward, then, onward. May the God of battles go with you and give you victory. So prays with all his heart, within this cage of iron and stone, your faithful friend, J. R. S.

*The “Castle,” Chester, Nov. 11, 1839.*

## ON THE DEATH OF \* \* \* \*.

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

"In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down and withereth," Ps. xc. 6.

## I.

The flowers of Spring have long since ceased to smile,  
Its gentle breezes now no longer play ;  
But pensive memory fain would dwell awhile  
On scenes like these that come and pass away ;  
Emblem of life's beginning and decline,  
Of many a mortals earth-born bliss—of mine !

## II.

I have seen the rising stem its leaf unfold,  
Push out the bud slow opening to the view ;  
Then wide display the gay flower tipt with gold  
And delicate white, or tinged with skylike blue.  
Beautiful sight it seemed—and I looked again—  
But the wind had swept it away, as it whistled along the plain !

## III.

I have also seen  
A lovelier flower its beauty disclose,  
Smile with the lily and blush with the rose  
And spread its sweets in the air ;  
And this, methought, was a sight more fair.

I have been  
To the spot where *this* favourite flowret grew,  
Where the warm sun shone and the soft wind blew ;  
But its beauty was gone—its sweetness fled,  
And there it lay on its earthy bed ;  
For the heat by day and the chill by night  
Had shrivelled its leaves and withered it quite !

## IV.

Say if it were weak for the tear to start,  
Or the sigh to burst from my sorrowful heart,  
When I saw her droop, decline and die,—  
Sweet flowret of frail mortality !

## A PASTORAL ADDRESS.

TO THE LEADERS, STEWARDS AND PREACHERS OF  
THE ASHTON CIRCUIT.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Though I cannot meet with you  
as I have been wont to do, it gives me much joy to

know that our separation is only that of the body, and but for a time. In mind and in heart we are still the same, we are still one. Many storms have gone over our heads since our connexion first began. Sapless branches and withered leaves have been strewed around us, but the root of our affection for each other and of our attachment to the truth has grown firmer and more tenacious of the soil with every raging blast of opposition and persecution. The truths I have spent so many years in endeavouring to teach amongst you have now been fairly, I may say, fully *tried*. No one can henceforth look upon them as crude theory or empty speculation. That, which has stood so many days of evil, and still stands, not only unhurt, but more vigorous and flourishing after many fierce assaults, must be something more than a vain dream. It is substance, not shadow—reality, not imagination. You have witnessed, in your own lives, and in the lives of thousands of your friends and neighbours, the power of the truth of God to withstand every thing that may be set against it, its power to make those happy, who, through their adherence to it, have been made to suffer. I do not ask of you to put your trust in man, or in the words of man's wisdom—but I do call upon you by the manifold trials you yourselves have gone through—by the manifold proofs of the power of that truth your own experience has supplied, your own observation beheld—to say whether you have believed a cunningly devised fable, or whether you do not, each one for himself, know in whom and for what you have believed. Personal and long-continued experience of the truth is worth more than all that others can tell us, no matter who they be, or to what they would persuade us. Look back upon all the way the Lord has brought you—and answer whether it has not been the best, the only true way through this world to the world to come. You, as well as myself, have ground for much thankfulness. We have had put into our hands the key to unlock the storehouse of heavenly truth. We have had its treasures spread before us. We have enjoyed much—there is much more yet left us to enjoy.

I have done my utmost to fasten in your minds the truth, that the word of God is the spring of all know-

ledge—the well-head of all wisdom, righteousness and love. Do you believe this? I know you do. Then one and all, and with all your might, preach the word to your fellow men. Your own eyes have been opened; do what you can to open the eyes of others. Your own hearts have been changed, seek to lead others to obtain the same blessed change. You feel happy in the work in which you are engaged; enlist all within your reach to be fellow-workmen along with you, until the whole neighbourhood bends to His sway whose rule is righteousness—whose kingdom is over all.

You are met together to see how this can be done. There is no way better than the good old way. Let each one, first of all, live and enjoy the truth. Out of the heart the mouth will then speak with power—peradventure with great effect. There is no eloquence like that of a heart glowing with the warmth of its own pure and holy feeling. There is no argument so convincing as that of a good conversation in consistent harmony with the precepts we endeavour to inculcate and enforce upon others. The manner of your ministrations is of little consequence compared with the matter of them. Tell the truth as far as you know it—as well as you can—and as closely suited to the state, the views and the wants of your hearers, as your own ability will enable you to do. Plain, simple, earnest and energetic appeals made to the understandings and hearts of men will never fail to produce corresponding fruits. You have seen this in thousands of instances. You will see it in thousands more if you steadfastly abide in the course you have so long pursued.

I am glad to hear that the short address I sent you a short time since has given you so much encouragement. If you want to give me pleasure, and to increase my hope, you have only to give yourselves more zealously than ever to the work in which we have hitherto laboured together.

Suffer nothing to interrupt the harmony of your union as a society. And that you may give no just ground of offence to any, beware of the introduction of any laws or usages that have not the express sanction of the word of God. The origin of most heresies and schisms may be attributed, in part at least, to the

undue exercise of authority in the attempt to impose upon the church doctrines or disciplinary rules other than those laid down in the Holy Scriptures. The best way to prevent division or strife is to go steadily on, doing good to all, as far as our power will allow. Where the offices of the church are such as imply trust, exertion, responsibility and danger, few will be found to covet them, or to strive for the mastery, where risk and loss will perhaps be all they receive in return for their service and duty.

As long as you are thus united and thus active in the spread of true religion—fear not what man may do unto you. Some of you have been sorely tried already. Others have trials of a more than ordinary kind to go through. To these I shall write more particularly at another time. In the meanwhile I exhort them and all of you to be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

I thank you for the warm expression of your confidence in my fidelity to the cause and my devoted affection to the flock, whose shepherd I have the honour to be. Rest assured, my dear brethren, that this your confidence is not misplaced. Your generous expressions of it are highly prized. I cherish them in my present solitude, and am proud to think that so far from being forgotten I am only the more beloved now that I am thus absent and in bonds. Accept my thanks for your proposal to mitigate, as far as you are able, the severities of my situation. Your sincere desire to do this is all that I require. Let your first and most strenuous exertions be directed to maintain your own independence and comfort as a society. Your chapels and schools must be supported first of all and last of all. Impress this upon the minds of your congregations. Tell them it is my most earnest wish—my entreaty—my command that they should preserve inviolate and unimpaired those institutions which I have laboured to set up amongst them. You know I never did care about myself, nor do I now. Look to your own independence. Let none enslave you. Do not forget the poor. Take care of them. This is the great end for which churches are established. I am in good health—and very com-

fortable. I shall be glad to see any of you who may be deputed to come over, though I think at this season a letter would be sufficient.

J. R. S.

*The "Castle," Chester, Sept. 27, 1839.*

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OFFICE AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE AGED  
AND THE YOUNG,  
WITH THEIR RELATIVE DUTIES.

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I am glad to hear of your welfare. It is cheering to me to know that I have left so many elders both in age and wisdom amongst the flock so long entrusted to my care. It has always been my aim to gather round me men of years, whose knowledge and experience, with sound understanding and unostentatious but steady and consistent piety, might at all times supply the church with every thing needed for good government and honourable example. It is a great and wide-spread evil of these times, that young and headstrong men are allowed to take the lead and guidance in affairs, both spiritual and temporal, that require the exercise of qualities existing only in the time-honoured fathers of mankind. In our schools and in our religious societies as well as in various other institutions, established for the education and training of the people, too much is left to the young, too little undertaken by the old. This, and every other departure from the wholesome laws of nature entails upon us nothing but mischief and confusion. Crude counsels end in disorder, and impetuous zeal in discomfiture and disgrace. It is impossible to conceive of the harm done to christianity by the eager, breathless haste, with which mere boys rush of themselves, or are thrust forward by others, into the ministry. Long before they know any thing, comparatively speaking, either of themselves, of the gospel they profess to preach, or of the people they are appointed to instruct, they are preferred to offices, which none ought to fill but those who have been rightly instructed unto the kingdom of God. No one is fit to teach another, until he himself have learnt what that is, which he is about to make known to his fellow men—nor is he fit to govern, who

has not learned to obey. You will not understand me as wishing to undervalue the work and usefulness of youthful intelligence and piety. Far from it. I would most carefully and most affectionately foster every unfolding bud of promise in the young. The gift that is in them, whether of the mind or of the heart, so far from being neglected, is to be sedulously cultivated; that rich and goodly harvests may be gathered in. What I wish to impress upon you is—on the one hand to give integrity, stability and character to your societies by keeping at their head the most aged, wise and vigilant of their members; and on the other hand so to rear the young, as to lead them to give a willing preference to their elders and betters, honouring them most by working, under their direction, to the utmost of their power. When all the life and energy of youth are wielded by the wisdom and skill of riper age, how much may not be done in the cause of truth and righteousness. I would fain enkindle the most ardent zeal for God and His cause in the breasts of my young friends, and I would at the same time point out to them how, and in what way they may be most usefully employed in a work, which I know lies near their hearts. You, my dear Sir, are doing well in taking these young men by the hand. Give them all the benefit of your own observation and experience. By a judicious and an impressive statement of truth, as it has been manifested in your own life, and in the history of events well known to you, lead them to *think for themselves*. Without this they will never *know* the truth—not having felt its power nor made it the subject of their serious afterthought. Neither reading nor talking will be of any use, unless they train themselves to *think*. Then, first, will they behold the beauty of truth, and love it, and speak of it earnestly to others. Give my kindest love to all the young men, who are placing themselves under the guidance of their elders. Might they not form a Library and Lecture at the Charlestown Meeting Room? You have some books already, others might be obtained if your friends were solicited for that purpose, and a small subscription would enable you to pay rent, &c. for the use of the building. It would do incalculable good at the present moment.

Your chapel can never be relieved by fresh loans. They would only involve you more and more. Make up your minds: 1st. Not to spend another penny on the building until you are out of debt. 2nd. To make a united and determined effort at once to pay off the small sums, that hamper you just now. Let every thing else give way to this. Say it *shall* be done, and you will soon do it. Let Leigh and a few like him set a good example, and others will soon follow it. It is not much amongst so many. You will never be easy until you have done it. 3rd. Besides the interest of the money still remaining, let something, however little, go towards liquidating a portion of the debt. If that building be suffered to fall, great for you will be the fall thereof.

The news from Newport has filled me with grief, though I was not surprised to hear it. Alas! for our poor country! Her children ask for bread, and the bayonet or the bullet silences their prayer! This is the true history of all these tragedies, these horrible tragedies. Soon there will hardly be a spot in all the land, that has not been dyed in blood, the blood of the best, but most hapless of our fellow-countrymen. O, God! undertake thou for us. Our help is in Thee. Give my love to each and to all. I am well—happy and hard at work. Quit you like men—and be strong—and steadfast—so will you animate and encourage your right trusty friend,

J. R. S.

*The "Castle," Chester, Nov. 9, 1839.*

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## OASTLER AND STEPHENS, OR THE WELSH RISING.

DEAR SIR,—So they will not let me alone even yet, though they have me here hand-bound and tongue-tied for fifteen months to come. *They* will not be still, but *I* must not stir. This is Whiggery with a witness and with a vengeance. They are poor players, that need such long odds. It must be a losing game for them, and it will soon be up. I say nothing of the personal wrong done to me and all others now in gaol for political "misdemeanors," by the new "gagging" system, which forbids all communication with the press. We are, at least I am for one, thus hindered from doing any thing

to maintain ourselves and families. I am not allowed to publish any work of general literature, science or morals—nor to write for any of the magazines or reviews on any subject! This entails upon me the whole expense of my own subsistence for eighteen months, and the subsistence of my family for the same period, not from my own earnings, but from money laid by—money borrowed, or money given, just as may happen. They care for nothing, so that their end is answered in stopping my mouth. Every political character, even down to Carlile and Taylor, has been left free to write what he liked and as he liked against the throne and the altar of the country, but *I* am not suffered to publish the Theology of the best of the Reformers and most celebrated of the Divines of the Church both before and after the Reformation down to the present time. There must be something sadly wrong in a system which requires exercise of a despotism like this. Why the veriest fool will begin to think, and thinking will begin to ask, how such things can be? If “oppression drives the wise man mad,” will it not, by a natural re-action, make the madman wise? Look around you—behold the change that has lately passed upon the body of the people, and say whether it be not so. The state of the gaols in England is a pretty correct index of the state of our national liberty and of our national religion. Both the one and the other must have sunk as low as they well could, before magistrates and clergymen—the ministers of the law and the christianity of the country—could subject so many thousands of their fellow-men to the brutal treatment to which they are doomed by the new, “reformed” and “improved” system of “prison discipline.” From all I can learn this is somewhere about the best gaol in England, and bad is the best. Unlike Knutsford, it happens to be in good hands, as far as the administration of the system is concerned. I have nothing to say against them. They are all, or nearly all of them, kind men carrying out a harsh and inhuman system. But it is a horrid system. Had I no other food—no other bedding, &c. than what the gaol affords, I believe I should hardly survive the eighteen months. That *I* and a few besides are allowed extra means of subsistence at our own expense, is no reason why *I*

should be blind to what *others* suffer, or heedless of their wretchedness. I was not permitted to receive the visits of my wife and family, *alone*, until I had first offered to subject myself to a personal examination, and had given my word of honour as a gentleman not to hold, by their means, any communication with the press. I have to thank the visiting magistrates for this "indulgence," and I must do them the justice to say that I believe, were they left to themselves, things would be much better than they are. But the fact is, the new philosophy best known by the name of "political economy," is fast withering every thing that has life in our social system. The very roots of the national tree will soon be dead and rotten to the last fibre. There has been a general meeting of the county magistrates a week or two ago, when it was agreed to write up to Lord Normanby to know whether the few "privileges" we enjoy should not be withdrawn, and the whole of us "felonized" according to the "law" in that case made and provided. These liberal justices want to know why we are allowed fire and candle, why we should be suffered to wear our own clothes, to buy our own food and to walk about without being sent to work in the "cotton room," &c. They long to have their hands upon us; but had rather have Lord Normanby's authority for putting on the screw and giving it a turn or two tighter than it has yet been twisted. His Lordship however, seeing what has been the consequence of torturing the Welsh prisoners, prudently declines to interfere, and leaves them to act according to their own discretion. So their "worships" have postponed the further consideration of this important question till the ensuing sessions. In the mean time we spend between twelve and thirteen hours out of the twenty-four every day in bed. This is one of the many ways they have, under the name of "regulation," of evading or violating the "law." Men are sentenced to "imprisonment" by the *judges*, but the *magistrates* can "regulate" it into "solitary confinement;" and by withholding all food, but bread and water, can compel men to hard labour, who were not sentenced to any thing of the sort.

I have spoken my mind very fully on all these points to Mr. Eaton our chaplain. I told him he ought not to

wonder if men pulled down gaols or burned down workhouses right "lawlessly," when they were so "lawfully" starved, degraded and tortured, as he himself well knew them to be.

This brings me back to the beginning of the letter again. If I am not allowed to say what I think of our infidel government, why should that infidel government be suffered to say what they choose about me. This is not fair. *They* should be silent, if *I* am to hold my tongue. But I find they are blaming me for what has happened in Wales. "Oastler and Stephens have done it all! *They* and not the poor, deluded, &c. ought to be hanged!" I was overjoyed to see this had been stated by the ministerial prints, because it involves two or three sound principles, such as, 1. When we see effects, we may safely presume causes. 2. We should do our best to investigate all doubtful occurrences and, if possible, find out what has been the occasion of them, and 3. where evil has been done, the prime movers and arch instigators of the evil ought to be punished the first and the most severely. I most heartily agree to, and am thankful to hear of, this royal reprieve—this postponement of the examination, as it affects the poor "mountaineers," until the country is thoroughly satisfied as to the cause which has led to another of those small outbreaks and little risings that have always been the fore-runners of revolution.

The "Times"—the only paper I am allowed to see—has published a list of wages in some of the "works" in Wales, with a view to show that these "deluded" men had no cause to rebel. This too involves a principle which I hope will not be lost sight of when the "Special Commission" shall have entered upon its solemn labours. If men have no right to "rise" so long as they are well fed, well clothed, well housed and well educated in knowledge, virtue and religion, out of their own honest earnings, it follows, that when they are worked well nigh to death and are starving, in rags, homeless and in every way done to dust, they ought not to sit still—they are bound to "rise" and look about them. This is the argument of the "Times," and as far as it goes not a bad one either. Now, for the facts—the facts—the facts! Let the "Special Commission" enquire into the "Case of the Labourers of England, Scotland, Ireland and

Wales," and if these labourers are *not* proved to be in a condition bordering upon actual starvation, whilst at the same time they are worked far worse than any race of brute beasts ever yet employed in labour, then may Lord John Russell "habeas corpus" me to the top of the highest gallows in England and "hang" me to his heart's content. But if my case be proved—if there be a cause—a justification—a necessity, according to their own showing, for a violent revolution, let them either remove that cause, or take the consequences. If to have foretold events be to have occasioned them, then I plead guilty to the "insurrection" in Wales. I have said over and over again that "the revolution had begun." It is going on. It will, it must go on. Nothing can now stop it. I and those, with whom I acted in my opposition to the "Factory System," the "New Poor-Law," and other practical oppressions, assisted the people in giving constitutional expression to their just complaints. We carried our grievances as Englishmen from our meetings—from our villages, towns and counties, in petition, remonstrance and demand to the legislature, our own representatives, and to the Throne, whereon we beheld a constitutional monarch. We were spurned—spit upon—and trampled under foot. It was made a crime to meet openly—to speak as our fathers spake. And what was left? why nothing but the dark—the secret—the dread "conspiracy"—nothing but that, which always leads to burning and to blood. I am now in a dungeon for trying to prevent this—I would have given my own blood to have prevented it. But they would not have it so. It was to be and it will not be otherwise. It is no use *warning* now. All *that* is now too late. Nothing but a wet and cloudy night saved Wales from falling into the hands of a people goaded into an actual—an organized—an armed rebellion! This they themselves acknowledged. It is not Chartism, it is *wrong*, *WRONG*, *WRONG*, in a thousand shapes, inflicted by the rich upon the poor, that has led to this and will lead to things a thousand times more awful than this. I never thought I should have lived to agree with the Whig—that those who have brought the people into this state may be "hanged," and not the poor deluded, &c. most devoutly prays, their and your most obedient servant,

J. R. S.

*The "Castle," Chester, Nov. 23, 1839.*

STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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MARCH, 1840.

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SOME PASSAGES OF THE LIFE OF A PARISH  
PRENTICE AT LITTON, AND CRESSBROOK MILLS.—  
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.—PART I.—FIRST APPRENTICE-  
SHIP.

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I was born in Hare-street, Bethnall-Green, London, in the year 1805, as I have been told by my grandmother, and was christened in Bethnall Green Church, in the same year. My father died when I was two years old, leaving two children, myself and Sarah my sister. She was about two years older than I. My father was buried in the above church yard. My mother kept us both, till I was about five years old, and then she took badly in a decline, and taken to the London hospital, London road, I and my sister were taken to the Bethnall Green workhouse. We used to go every Sunday to see our mother. She was confined to her bed. I well remember how my mother used to save up a little meat for us, and have it ready against we came. She gave it us at her bed side. We used to stay two or three hours with her, and then bid her good bye till next Sunday. She came out, said to be cured; but a week after leaving the hospital her disorder returned and she died. An old man, whom I used to call grandfather, called Jolly, an undertaker in Hare-street, buried my mother. I and my sister were sent for out of the workhouse to attend the funeral. We continued in the workhouse, and were well done to. We had good food,

good beds, and liberty two or three times a week. We were kept at school and taught to read, and in every respect were very kindly treated.

The same year that my mother died, I being between six and seven years of age, there came a man from Whitehaven in Cumberland, for a number of parish apprentices. We were all ordered to come into the board-room, about forty of us. There were I dare say twenty gentlemen seated at the table with pens and paper before them. Our names were called over one by one. We were all standing before them in a row. My name was called, and I stepped out into the middle of the room. They said, "well John, you are a fine lad, would you like to go into the country?" I said, "yes sir." "How old are you?" I answered, "I dont know; I think I am about ten." I was but six or seven, but I said ten that I might have a better chance of being picked out to go. We had often talked over amongst ourselves how we should like to be taken into the country. Mr. Nicholls, the old master, used to come amongst us and tell us what fine sport we should have amongst the hills, what time we should have for play and pleasure. He said we should have plenty of roast beef and get plenty of money, and come back gentlemen to see our friends. This made us very wishful to go, and we used to put one another up to the scheme of making the gentlemen believe we were older than we really were. The committee picked out about twenty of us, all boys, as the fittest to go. Whitehaven was the name of the place we were to be sent to. In a day or two after this two coaches came up to the workhouse door.— We were got ready. They gave us about a shilling a piece to take our attention and we set off. I can remember a crowd of women standing by the coaches at the workhouse door, crying "shame on them to send poor little children away from home in that fashion." Some of them were weeping. I heard one say, "I would run away if I was them." They drove us to the Paddington canal, where there was a boat provided to take us. We were about two hours too soon for the boat, and were taken into a public house, by the side of the canal, and kept in a chamber up stairs. Atkins, the lodge tenter, was with us.— When the boat were ready, we were ordered into the

wharf yard, and whilst they were getting the others into the boat, I ran behind some of the carts and waggons in the yard, and gave them the slip. I went straight back to the workhouse again, but I took care to spend the money they had given me first. I went into a cutler's shop, and bought a pen-knife with it. I went to the lodge door and knocked. It was opened by the old woman, whose name was Woolley. She let me in. When I had got in, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls came and asked me what I was doing there, what I had come back for. Before I had time to give them any answer, Mrs. Nicholls flew at me, knocked me down and kicked me straight into the yard, and sent word that I was to be stript and put to bed for two or three days. She came to see me whilst I was in bed, and beat me severely. She said she would cure me of running away. Atkins the lodge tenter, always bore me a spite after this. He used to throw pieces of wood or any thing at me, and nearly lamed me two or three times. I was then put into the oakum cellar to work with the men and women. I remained in this way till I was about ten years old in reality, very uncomfortable. We went to be examined by the board once a quarter, and when I walked in I could often hear the gentlemen say to one another, "that's the runaway."

Then came another order for prentices from Litton Mill, in Derbyshire. We went through the same examination as before. They asked me whether I would like to go into the country this time, telling me I had grown into a very fine lad, and would soon become a man and earn my twenty shillings a week. This was in 1815 about three weeks before Christmas. I agreed to go, finding myself so very uncomfortable in the workhouse. I wanted to get off, and did not care much where I went. We were taken this time in a coach, about ten of us to the Peacock Inn at Islington, when we met about the same number from the Clerkenwell workhouse. We were all put in and outside of a stage coach, a man named Savney, having the charge of us. This was on a Friday about one o'clock at noon in the depth of winter. We travelled all night I was outside. It was bitter cold. We had nothing on but our usual clothes and very little to eat on the road. We got to Buxton at four o'clock Saturday afternoon.

A covered cart was waiting for us there. We all got in and drove off to the "prentice house" at Litton Mill, about six miles from Buxton amongst the hills. The cart stopped and we were marched up to the house, where we saw the master, who came to examine us, and give orders where we were to be put. They brought us some supper. We were very hungry but could not eat it. It was Derbyshire oatcake, which we had never seen before. It tasted as sour as vinegar. On Monday morning we were ordered down to the mill, where we were again examined and sorted out for the kind of work they thought us best fitted to perform. I was picked out to tent the back of a rover.— For about the first week we were allowed to give over at seven o'clock till we got more used to it. We went to work at five in the morning; at the week's end we were worked the same as the rest. Our regular time was from five or before five in the morning till nine or ten at night, and on a Saturday till eleven and often till twelve o'clock at night, and then we were sent to clean the machinery on the Sunday. No time was allowed for breakfast—no sitting to dinner and no time for baggin or tea. We worked endaway till dinner time, when the water-wheel stopt for about half an hour. We stopt working and went to the "house" about three hundred yards from the mill.— The river Wye runs between the mill, which is in Litton parish, and the prentice house which is on the Taddington side. A wooden bridge is thrown across the stream. It was a large stone house surrounded by a wall from two to three yards high with but one door, which was kept lock-ed. It was capable of lodging about one hundred and fifty prentices. When we went, there were about an hundred altogether, girls and boys. We all eat in the same room, and all went up a common stair case to our bed-chamber; all the boys slept in one chamber and all the girls in another. The beds were in rows along the wall, a second tier being fixed over the first. The beds were thus made double by a square frame work—one bed above, the other below. This was done to save room. There were about twenty of these beds, and we slept three in one bed. The girls bed-room was of the same sort as ours. There were no fastenings to the two rooms and no one to watch over us in the night or to see what we did.

We went to the mill at five o'clock without breakfast, and worked till about eight or nine, when they brought us our breakfast, which consisted of water porridge with oat-cake in it and onions to savour it with, in a tin can. This we eat as we best could, the wheel never stopping. We worked on till dinner time, which was not regular, sometimes half-past twelve, sometimes one. Our dinner was thus served to us. Across the door way of the room was a cross-bar like a police bar, and on the inside of the bar stood an old man with a stick to guard the provisions. These consisted of Derbyshire oat-cakes cut into four pieces, and ranged in two stacks. The one was buttered and the other treacled. By the side of the oat-cake were cans of milk piled up—butter-milk and sweet-milk. As we come up to the bar one by one the old man called out "which 'll 'ta have, butter or treacle, sweet or sour." We then made our choice, drank down the milk and ran back to the mill with the oat-cake in our hand, without ever sitting down. We then worked on till nine or ten at night without bite or sup. When the mill stopped for good, we went to the house to our supper, which was the same as the breakfast—onion porridge and dry oat-cake. But even this was not always ready for us. Many a time we were told they had sent the jackass to Tydeswell for half a load of meal, to make the porridge with, and we used to go and meet it, and were ready to eat the ass and meal too—some of us used to roam in the fields and steal turnips. We were nearly clemmed to death. A farmer named Megginson from Taddington had a turnip field at the back of the prentice house. We used often, especially on Sunday to steal turnips out of this field, and go into the lanes and sit down in groups together to eat them. It was a common saying in seed-time that "Megginson was sowing us another field of turnips." He would give us half an acre if we would steal no more. They often caught us but never did anything to us. He knew how we were clemmed. We had no tailor to mend our clothes, no shoe-maker to mend our shoes. We wore our workhouse dress and never had any new clothes, while I stopped.

Ellice Needham the master, had five sons,—Frank, Charles, Samuel, Robert and John. These young men, particularly Frank and Charles, used us very cruelly, to-

gether with a man named Swann, an overlooker. They used to go up and down the mill with hazel sticks out of the wood, and lay on most unmercifully. Frank once beat me till he was frightened himself. He thought he had killed me. He had struck me on the temples and knocked me dateless. I was a long time before I came to myself again. Swann had a slick about two feet long with a pin or needle fixed at the end of it and fastened in with a wax-band. This he carried about with him, and would come slyly behind us, and run it into the thigh or any other part of the body, when we were not thinking about it. He once knocked me down and belaboured me with a thick stick over the head and face, cursing me in the most horrid way. To save my head I raised my arm, which he then beat with all his might. My elbow was broken. I bear the marks, and suffer pain from it to this day, and always shall as long as I live. The bone was fractured, but never had any notice taken of it. It was very seldom we missed a day without been beaten in the most cruel and wanton manner. Old Needham was as bad as any of the rest or worse if that was possible. He would sometimes come and begin to beat us as hard as he could, hitting us all over the body, until he seemed quiet tired.— He would then stop as if he had done ; and move off as if he was going away, but he would come back again, and at it again--and move away and come again, time after time. I was determined to let the gentlemen of the Bethnal Green parish know the treatment we had, and I wrote a letter and put it into the Tydeswell post-office. It was broken open and given to old Needham. He sent for me down to his house one day at dinner-time, together with another boy of the name of John Oats, who was concerned in it along with myself. He beat us with a knob-stick till we could scarcely crawl. Sometime after this two or three gentlemen came down from London to make inquiries respecting us. But before we were examined, we were washed and cleaned up and ordered to tell them we liked very well and were very welltreated. Needham and his sons were in the room at the time. They asked us questions about our treatment, which we answered as we had been told, not daring to do any other, as we knew what we should catch, if we told them the truth.

There was no school for us, but on Sunday, a man named Harrison used to come over from Tydeswell to teach us to read a bit. Every night when we had got our suppers we sat round the table and young Mr. Frank read prayers to us out of the common prayer-book. Sometimes Mrs. Needham came to prayers along with us. We finished by singing a psalm. A man walked up and down between the tables with a stick to keep us from going to sleep. I have caught many a whack over my head. It was impossible to keep awake.

This Frank and his brother, amongst other cruelties, used, out of bravado, to take up the petticoats of big girls and beat them most unmercifully. In this way I continued for about three years, until Mr. Needham became a bankrupt. I and two more, John Robinson, and George Matthews, started off one Tuesday morning about five o'clock without shoes, stockings, or hat, on our way to London. The first place we came to was Bakewell. Here we met one of the overlookers, Bill Hally, who had been for a box. He saw us and wanted to stop us, but we over-got him. We begged our road to Derby. About four miles beyond Derby at ten o'clock at night, we slept in a hay loft—and proceeded through Loughborough and Leicester, and slept the second night under a hay stack near Market-Harborough. We got behind coaches and travelled this way very quick, being afraid of being taken. The next day the guard of one of the London coaches beckoned of us to come on; I ran on and clambered up to the top of the coach—the other two clung fast to the coach. He asked me where I came from and where I was going. I told him the truth, all about it from the begining. He said he should come to a place e'en-now where he would put us all three in. I said I did not mind. He blew his horn to change horses, and then made a gathering amongst the passengers for us; he gathered four shillings for us, and set us down on this side Dunstable at the Chalk Hills.—He told us if we made haste we should get to London the next day. We walked on to St. Albans, and slept in a cart that night, the third after leaving Litton. We arrived in London about two o'clock Friday afternoon, barefoot, bare-legged, without hat and all in rags, tattered and torn. I went to Hackney in search of my sister and found her

living with my grandmother. My sister cried sadly when she saw me, and so did my grandmother, when they saw the ragged and wretched state I was in. They gave me something to eat, and washed me and put me to bed. I had never been in bed for three nights; my feet swelled so after I got warm in bed, that I could not get up in the morning. They were so cut, and so stiff after it that I could not walk properly for a fortnight. When I got well so that I could begin stirring about, I found I wanted keeping, and became troublesome, having no one to look to but my grandmother, who could hardly keep my sister. My grandmother went somewhere for some relief for me, and then took me somewhere, I think they called it Guildhall: there were, I remember, two wooden giants and a wooden clock. It was before the lord mayor. My grandmother laid my case down before him, telling him the whole story.— He ordered me to go to the workhouse of my parish, Bethnal Green. I went and they took me in according to order. He wrote out an order and gave it to her. She shewed this order and I was admitted. In a few weeks I got work as a draw-boy for Mr. Dubbs, Pollard's Row, Bethnal Green Road, a silk weaver; he paid me five shillings and sixpence a week. I went backwards and forwards to and from the workhouse to my masters and took my wages every week to Mr. Nicholls, the workhouse master. There were two other boys, who had run away from Litton Mill, James Arnott, and Samuel Devine. These boys were part of those who were sent to Litton at the sametime as myself, and had found their way back to London in the same manner as I had done. They were both in the workhouse when I got there; after we had been about six months in the workhouse, the gentlemen wanted to pass us back to the parish of Taddington, to which they said we belonged through our apprenticeship. James Arnott had had the flesh and muscles of the right arm torn off. Robert Gully, the overseer, had struck him a heavy blow, which sent him spinning amongst the machinery. The driving strap caught him and mangled his arm in a most shocking manner. It was never right again. Devine is still living.— He comes now and then to my house, where we talk over these old sketches, many a time. When I told my master Mr. Dubbs that I was going to be removed to Taddington, he offered to take me as an apprentice. I was now about

fourteen years of age, and liked my work and my new master. He and his wife were very kind to me, I wanted to stop with him, but the board would not allow it, as they said it would make me chargeable to their parish again.— One of the parish officers, Mr. Stokes, took us all three to Whitechapel, before the magistrates and told the case.— I heard one of the magistrates say “I thought you were to send no more children down into the country in that way.” Mr. Stokes answered that our master had become a bankrupt, and that we had strayed up to London and had become chargeable to the parish again, and that all he wanted was an order to remove us to our parish of Taddington, where we should not have to work any more in the factory. Then the magistrates signed the order for our removal. We then went back to the work house. We were all very loath to go back. We told Mr. Stokes how we had been clemmed and ill-used. He told us that if we were ill-used again, and would write to him, he would see that the parish should interfere for us. Next morning we took our farewell of all our comrades again, and proceed with this Mr. Stokes to the Peacock at Islington. A man, whose name I forget, was sent down with us. We went by coach.— The coach left the “Peacock” at about one o’clock on a Friday, the same as before. It was the middle of winter, christmas time. We were very badly clothed for the journey having nothing but the common workhouse dress. We were almost starved to death, and had it not been for the kindness of some gentlemen who were inside, we should have perished. After being out all night, the snow falling very fast, about four o’clock in the morning, one of the gentlemen said he was sure those boys would be starved to death, and very kindly took us all three inside.— They gave us a little spirits to warm us. We got to Buxton about one or two o’clock on the Saturday. Thence we were carried by coach to Taddington, eight miles. They put us into a cottage house, called the workhouse, where we found about twenty women, boys and men our old companions, who had been ‘prentices along with us at Litton Mill. I tarried there betwixt a fortnight and a month. Then the overseer, who went by the name of the “old sergeant,” Mycott was his proper name, took me and three more, and made some sort of a bargain with William Newton to take us as prentices at Cressbrook Mill.

## MY FATHER-LAND, GOOD NIGHT !

BY GEORGE STEPHENS.

## I.

My father-land, good night !  
 With a heavy heart I leave thee,  
 As by the moon's pale light,  
 My tearful eyes behold thee—  
 Thy mountain shadows resting on the sea ;  
 Whose sleepless waves surround the home-  
 land of the free

## II.

My father-land, good night !  
 My gaze is still towards thee,  
 Ere from my aching sight  
 The dimming shadows shroud thee ;  
 One more last lingering look, whilst yet I may.  
 And then farewell thy shores, farewell,  
 perhaps, for aye.

## III.

Good-night, my father-land !  
 Land of my boyhood's years  
 Whose joys were traced in sand,  
 In rock whose tears ;  
 Fast as thy fleeting coasts, they've fled away,  
 To where time's dreary night breaks into  
 cloudless day.

## IV.

My father-land, farewell !  
 Land of my youthful days,  
 Whose glooms still with me dwell,  
 Eclipsed their rays ;  
 Life's streams, alas ! in slumbering smoothness flow  
 But till some deep dark gulph embraces  
 them below

## V.

My father-land, adieu !  
 England, my earliest home !  
 Though other climes I view,  
 For months, for years to come,  
 Can I forget thy merry greenwood bowers,  
 Thy woods, and hills, and streams—thy  
 smiling fields and flowers ?

## VI.

My father-land, good bye !  
 Good bye ! if 'tis for ever,  
 Thine image in the sky  
 Shall leave me never ;  
 But still live on, to gild the dreary past,  
 And beckon my return o'er the wide waters' waste.

## VII.

My father-land, good night !  
 Land of the brave and free ;  
 Land of truth's mid-day light,—  
 Love, Law, and Liberty.  
 God bless thee, still may God defend the right !  
 Home of my heart, my father-land, good night !

A PASTORAL ADDRESS.

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MY DEAR SIR,---Mind your own business, and be quite easy about me. Work away as if all rested with yourselves and leave me to suffer with patience and in silence. You are much mistaken if you think the time of my bondage will be shortened by a single day. No such thing. I shall have to stay here for the space of eighteen calendar months, and for five years after that, unless I can find bail to the amount required. All wishes, hopes and prayers for the merciful interference of the crown in my behalf, are empty and good for nothing. The exercise of the royal prerogative is in the hands of men, who know me well—and they know me too well to dream for a moment that I will ever ask them to interfere for my liberation; or ever consent to be set free on "conditions," or for "considerations" such as are given or affected in cases of this description. No! no! they shall have their pound of flesh, and I will preserve my integrity, I had rather stay for eighteen years instead of eighteen months than have it supposed that I had been corresponding with Secretaries of State on the subject, either personally or through my friends. There are many things I should have written to the Home Office and to Parliament about, but for this; no man shall have it to say that I tried or ever countenanced others in trying to make terms with government for my release. Never write to me again on this subject, and never think about it amongst yourselves. I am here for the next twelve months safe enough, and am striving to spend my time in such a way as to make myself more useful to my fellow creatures when the opportunity for so doing shall arrive. I look to you to make up any lack of service that may arise through my absence, more than a hundred fold. As elders of the church or as private members let every man do his duty, God being his helper, to the utmost of his power. You know where the truth is to be found, you hear what the truth is, and how it is to be made known to your neighbours. The goodness of God, which Jesus Christ taught to those who flocked around him, was fastened in their hearts by the manifold deeds of goodness which he wrought before their eyes. There is no way to the soul of

man like this. In this as in all other respects, Christ is the way and the truth and the life ; if we would teach like him, we must live like him, the more we do the works he did, the more shall we speak the words he spake. "Hereby shall men know that ye have learned of me, if ye keep my sayings and do all that I have bidden you." This is the sweet lesson, to tread in his steps, to set our feet in the footmarks he has left for us to walk in.

An unceasing and unwearied following of Christ, your head will best keep you from jarring and jangling amongst yourselves, or being entangled with those who would draw you into their broils and dissensions. The man who goes about doing good has neither time nor taste for strife nor wrangling ; he is about his master's business, and must not, will not loiter or fall out by the way. I am glad to hear that on the whole you have so little to bewail on this head, much less than might have been looked for. Go steadily on and you will have both prosperity and peace ; the good deed will grow and spread and its show of flowers and fruits, will be beautiful to look upon.

You say that my sentiments on the evils of "party spirit" are approved of by the member for your borough, I am glad of it, but I should be gladder to hear that he had the courage to break the bands of party and become the man his heart would have him be. It is this very spirit of party that has sunk him so low, and worse than wasted the gifts he had for good when he first began his public career ; he had not strength to be what he aimed to be, and therefore could not shun the rocks he saw before him. The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. But this is an age of weakmindness ; all is piecing, patching and make-shift. Policy and expediency apply their temporary palliatives, when principle and integrity ought to proceed wisely but resolutely to apply their remedy, no matter how harsh in itself or how unpalatable to the patient. We have been so long accustomed to our "comforts" that we cannot bear to be "uncomfortably" good. Who is willing to give back or to give up anything that he hath for the welfare of the rest ? and how, I pray you, is the ship to be righted unless we all agree to offer up all we have to save all from wreck and loss ? There is no way but this, and it is a way we none of us very much like to take ; so we go jabbering

and blundering on, and ten to one will so do, until there is a dead stop—and then.—You want me to tell you all about the recent decision of the magistrates in the matter of the Magazine, all I know about it is this. The magistrates it seems, are displeased at a good many letters that have been written lately from this prison, some of mine among the rest. They are too political, or too something, I can hardly tell what, for as men now-a-days understand politics, my letters must be very stupid stuff, being filled with anything rather that; but they have been objected to, and I am to receive no more "proof sheets," and to write no more strictures on prison discipline, and am to subject all my correspondence to the inspection of the magistrates themselves, instead of Mr. Dunstan the governor &c. There now you have it all, all that I can tell you, so if there are any more blunders in the future numbers of the Magazine, you must not blame me that is all. Mr. Willis will correct the press as well as he can. If I had thought of this before I came here when I was writing and arranging my papers, I might have learned to write a better hand, or have had my things copied, but it is now too late for this, so you must do the best you can. I had rather you did *not* insert anything from other people, as I cannot now be answerable for what appears. I except any compositions of Mr. Oastler's, which of course must be inserted, provided we obtain his permission.

I need hardly tell you to remember me very affectionately to all my friends. I am pleased to hear so good an account of your stability and progress; six months are passed since I was torn from you. Ye have stood the first shock well, and may reckon upon more settled and prosperous times for the future; the worst every way is over. There are better days to come; seek for them, pray for them, work for them, and your hopes will not wither.

I thank you for the "plan." I suppose I need not apologize for not preaching when you gave me no appointments. I think of you most days, but on Sundays most of all. I think I am strong enough for a pretty long sermon. Twelve months longer rest will be quite plenty for me, as much as I shall want. Your first care should be to look well after the three principal places, see that they are sufficiently supplied and every thing connected with them regularly.

and punctually attended to. This should be your first business. When that is done see what you can do farther in the outskirts of the towns, and in the neighbouring hamlets and towns. Let your centre be firm before you travel far from it. Read the word of God, teach and preach from house to house. Talking to thousands will do little good unless you talk to twos and threes.

As the "penny post" is the great boon of the day, I hope you will show yourselves thankful for so great a gift by a frequent enjoyment of it. I cannot hear from you too often. Tell the young men I shall be glad to hear from any of them, and if I can advise them I shall be happy to do so. We are well, thank God.

I am,

Very faithfully yours,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

Will you be so good as to give my love to the choir at Staley-bridge, and thank them for their kind letter with its inclosure. They shall have an answer next week.

*The "Castle," Chester, Feb. 8, 1840.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL.

Sir,

During my sojourn at Nottingham a few months ago, you will I dare say recollect that Mr. BARNETT (your union workhouse master,) thought proper without any provocation, to accuse me, in my absence, of high crimes and misdemeanors. You have not forgotten I am sure, how silent my petulant accuser became, when he found that I was in the town, ready to defend myself.

Recognizing in this same Mr. BARNETT, the strenuous advocate of that law, which is now revolutionizing England, (i. e. the accursed new-poor-law.) it was natural that I should, when he had thrown down the gauntlet, make some little inquiry into the working of that law in your neighbourhood.

I discovered one case of the most flagrant fraud, practised upon the public by the poor-law commissioners, falsifying the accounts of the union, stating the *gain* of the new-poor-law, to be just as much per cent, as was the actual loss to the ratepayers of a parish in that union. I published this fraudulent fact; but neither correction, apology nor

contradiction, has, so far as I know, been made, either by the poor law commissioners, the guardians, or by their pet tool Mr. B. It is natural however, that this exposure of the villiany of the supporters of the hateful new-poor-law should have raised their ire against me ; and finding that, they had exhausted their vengeance on myself, their next revengeful step seems to have been to punish a poor man of the name of BEECOCK, whose only crimes are, that after having been the father of six or seven soldiers, he has dared to refuse "THE HOUSE" and still clings to the cave, which his own hands have dug out of the Sorcinton rock, near Nottingham. I beg pardon, sir, he is also guilty of loving his Saviour, and of having honoured me, by reciting to me the most interesting annals of his life.

You will remember I dare say, sir, that I related to you some facts concerning this good poor christian, at a public meeting on the forest near your town, and that some anonymous scribe, dared to attack and rail against poor BEECOCK ; his cowardly accuser was silenced by an offer on my part, to attend with him, for the purpose of investigating all his statements and publishing them. This offer, however, was not accepted. I then thought that the malice, even of a poor-law demon, would have been satisfied. But no ! I have before me the proof that the infernal spirit of the partizans of the new-poor-law, can only be satiated by destroying christian charity, and by infusing hatred, malice, and revenge, into those societies which are pre-eminently supposed to incorporate all that is lovely in christian practise. The horror with which I have perused the following extract, from the letter of a Nottingham friend, will I am sure, be participated in, by every one, whose charitable feelings are not entirely destroyed, whose christianity is not entirely banished by that spirit of anti-christ, which denounces charity as a crime, and which is incorporated in that hateful statute the new-poor-law. Read sir, what my friend says.

"Do you remember poor old TOMMY BEECROFT, who lives in a cave at Sorcinton, which he has made for himself; and wont go to the Bastile ? Well : your visit to him has unfortunately been the cause of much persecution and affliction to the poor old fellow, and a BENEVOLENT society of *liberal* DISSENTERS have taken him off their list, because

*Oastler* has stood under his rugged roof and listened to his true and pathetic tale. We manage as well as we can to make amends to him for this wretched tyranny, and the whole amount of it does not keep him from blessing you and your kind attention to his little story."

Poor BEECROFT! I would relieve thee, but *thy* persecutors are *mine* also, and have deprived me of that honour! May be some real christian will read this account of the "wretched tyranny" of the "*liberal* DISSENTING BENEFICIENT Society" towards thee, and deem thee, the father of six or seven soldiers..thee, the humble worshipper of thy Saviour..thee, a poor old christian man.. to be worthy of relief.. to be the fit recipient of christian charity; although *Oastler*, the unrelenting foe of tyrants, "has stood under thy rugged roof and listened to thy true and pathetic tale!"

Sir, this act of "wretched tyranny" is the strongest proof on record, of the unholy, un-christian spirit of the New Poor Law! Do you not see, Sir, that it Satanizes the very elect!

If Christians will not *now* unite to cast out this Legion, tongues will be given to stones.

I remain, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

RICHARD OASTLER.

No. 8, Rawstorne-street,

Brompton, Middlesex.

Jan. 3rd, 1840.

P.S.—How is it that you have so much distress amongst the operatives in your town and neighbourhood? Did not BARNETT tell you that the New Poor Law would elevate the character and increase the wages of your labourers? Foolish deceived man! It has demonized your saints; impoverished your labourers; and is fast ruining your shopkeepers! Poor Barnett!

R. O.

### THE BLESSED ENDS OF WEDLOCK:—

As set forth by Paley, but which are overturned by the present Factory System, by the New-Poor-Law and all such like infidel institutions in this country.

1. The private comfort of the *individuals*, especially of the *female* sex.
2. The production of the greatest number of healthy children, their better education, and the making of some provision for their settlement in life.
3. The peace of human society, in cutting off a principal source of contention by assigning one or more women to one man, and protecting his exclusive right by sanction of morality and law.
4. The better government of society by distributing the community into separate families and appointing over each the authority of a master of a family, which has more actual influence than all civil authority put together.
5. The same end in the additional security which the state receives for the good behaviour of its citizens from solicitude they feel for the welfare of their children and from their being confined to permanent habitations.
6. The encouragement of industry. Not a word need be said to shew that all these blessed ends are thwarted by the new ways in which the work of this country is carried on. The man is no longer the bread earner for wife and children. Out of every ten handicraftsmen there are at least nine, who, toil as they will, cannot, with all sparsomeness and thrift, keep any but themselves—and indeed they can hardly do that. It follows then that they either must not marry, or marrying must make their weak wife and young child come with them afield or into the mill, smithy, the coal-pit or where else they sweat out their very blood for bread. All are thus wasted together—all together are worn down, and sink lower and lower in body and mind, losing with their own joys the happiness of heart and home—all power to fill up aright the room allotted to them in the state. Children are no longer brought up—the hearth and cottage doorstead are no longer the school-ground of all the sweet homely virtues—despair makes fathers heedless of the children's future welfare, heedless indeed of the joy of having children—homes are broken up—and society, instead of being a rich cluster of happy households, ring within ring, becomes an uneasy, restless, heaving mass of anti-social individuals—hateful and hating one another. Verily these our pleasant, boastful institutions will be the lash to scourge us with.

## LONGING AFTER GOD.

(After *Vittoria Colonna*.) — BY J. R. STEPHENS.

Like as the hungry birdling when it hears  
 And sees its mindful mother hovering bend  
 O'er the warm nest to give the needed food,  
 The food and sight of her new life supplying,  
 Impatient stretches forth its half-fledged wings,  
 And strives to follow her untried flight,  
 And warbles forth a song of thanks, too sweet,  
 And rich and full for ought but love to teach ;—  
 So I, when warmer, mightier, holier comes  
 The ray-light of God's love, and fills my soul,  
 Enkindling there a fire before unknown,  
 That upward rises to its parent flame ;  
 Impatient mount on love's young wing, and soon  
 Forgetting self, forgetting all beside.  
 Soar up to Him, and feel myself in heaven—  
 Thoughts, thanks and love—all in—all with my God !

## LETTER ON PARTY CLUBS.

The mistake which lies at the bottom of Party Clubs is this. Instead of giving all men credit for equal sincerity of purpose in aiming at the common good, and throwing the door wide open for all who will, to come in and speak their mind freely, without let, without hinderance and without fear. . the clubbists themselves lay claim, at the very outset, to exclusive or especial purity of motive ; take up as if they were settled, the points which ought to be left for many-sided discussion, and keep the door close shut and double barred against all who will not subscribe the creed, religious or political, which has already been adopted by the general body. The evils springing out of this ground mistake are both many and great. The more obvious ones I will pass over, and will only mention one or two of the principal and most pernicious. Clubbists and partizans of all kinds are always found to be ignorant and cowardly ; because, from the very nature of party, they are seldom led to study and investigate the principles of the

faith they profess. They have a loose and confused notion that the creed, which so many have already adopted, must be right, [especially if they are told that such and such men, said to be very wise or very great, have adopted it] and thinking it would be almost a sin for *them* to doubt or disbelieve, they swallow down the whole creed at a draught, and, resting upon this act and proof of orthodoxy, they never think of inquiring afterwards, but go on..not growing in knowledge and understanding of the truth, but in an obstinate pig-headedness, which will neither reason nor be reasoned with. They begin their career by being nothing worse than shallow and unthinking but harmless individuals: they end it by shewing, as members of a numerous body, every mark of stupidity, intolerance and bigotry. Those who cannot underwrite one creed, too often stumble over some of its proper notions, and fall into the very opposite extreme. This leads to the formation of another and again another and another, until there is no end to distinct and separate parties, in some one or other of which we nearly all of us find ourselves, almost without knowing either the why or the wherefore of our peculiar opinions. Hence it is that we grow up not only in error but in uncharitableness. The mind is narrowed and weakened and permanently fixed in the belief of a lie, or at the best of a very small and disjointed portion of the truth. Hence it is likewise, that those, who when in the midst of the herd make the loudest noise, and the greatest show of boldness, turn out to be the biggest cowards when they are caught out of the crowd and are taken simply to answer for the hope that they boasted was in them, The fact is they never knew before what it was to stand on their own feet and by themselves. They have never sold all they had, and bought the field where the jewel of truth was hid. They have never dug and dug until they found that precious pearl. They know it not nor its value; so it is not to be wondered at, if, when put to the test, they are found to be weak and have not the courage to count all things for loss, for its price and excellency. This will explain to you why it is that the persons you mention and many besides them, have suffered their employers to wheedle or threaten them out of their supposed principle. I have always shewn you that it must be so. He never can stand in the evil

day of fiery trial who cannot say “ I know for myself what the truth is and what it is worth, and what it can do for me in the time of need.” I take the opportunity now afforded me of again urging upon you a personal investigation of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. What? will any man, who knows him the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, fear those, who even if suffered to do their worst, can only kill the body, but have no power to hurt the soul? Will he who has learnt of Christ and follows Christ allow himself to be overawed into a denial or an abjuration of his holy profession? No! never, he will not, he cannot, become a bondsman. Christ’s followers are freemen. The love that is within them from on high casteth out fear; they do not live in dread of what man can do unto them. If there are amongst you those who are weak and fainthearted, let such as are strong comfort and establish them. In this way you must be helpful to one another, bearing one another’s burdens. It was to be expected that the masters you name would prove bolder and more bitter in the exercise of their power. They rage because their reign is short. Withstand them by doing what God has bidden, and by trusting to what God has said shall happen. They who put their trust in him shall never be brought to shame.

These acts and instances of weakness are very lamentable. It is our duty to do what we can to those who have thus yielded and given way. This can only be done by endeavouring to induce them to examine into the grounds of their belief; unless we build upon the rock and know the house to be well reared and upon a good foundation we are not likely to stand when the rain and wind and storm begin to beat upon it.

But there is a description of cowardice much worse in itself and much more hurtful to others than the one we are speaking of, an example of which you have adduced in your letter received this morning. I call it the cowardice of clubbists, because I would not give it a harsher name.— Alluding to the foolish “ Holiday,” (by opposing which, you say I saved your neighbourhood from the most eminent danger, though I thereby brought a hurricane of abuse and animosity upon my own head) you remark that all the most boisterous braggarts who would carry it out, were when the time came, as all such blusterers are, the great-

est cowards, running away themselves and leaving their simple but more honest neighbours in the lurch. You also tell me that the editor of the *Northern Star* himself assured you that "he would have sent it to the winds, had he been allowed; but that Mr. O'Connor bid him wait awhile to see whether the minds of the people could not be brought to bear on that point." How conduct like this should be described, I hardly know. I have no wish to bring my mind to the task. You know I have never spoken evil of your so-called "Leaders." But in the fact you have mentioned, do you not see a concentration of the manifold evils of Clubbism? Truth cannot be tested by majorities. If we are to wait until majorities have declared themselves in favour of this and that before we deliver or perhaps I should rather say before we form or dare to entertain an opinion of our own, what a state our own mind must be in—and what a strange idea we must have of public obligation. The refusal of the "*Northern Star*" to insert the letter you sent to disclaim any connexion with the scheme of the robbery of the "*Stephens' Fund*" is another case in point. A party cannot afford to be honest and therefore cannot allow the truth to be told, when that truth would militate against their party purposes and maneuvers. The attempt of Mr. O'Connor to bully Mr. Fielden out of the money, he held only as trustee, and the threat of gibbeting him in the *Northern Star* as the man who was answerable with the fate of Frost, coupled with the sneaking, shabby way in which he afterwards tried to borrow that which he could not steal, has it seems opened your eyes to the character of that disinterested patriot and his patriotic paper. Well, I told you you would find things out in time. I have done nothing—have said nothing to alter your opinion of that man. He has done it all himself and I cannot help it. You now see that the paper, which was established by your money almost exclusively, and which you have continued to support, because you believed what you were so often told that Mr. O'Connor never personally influenced its editorship, turns out to be a mere instrument for that same Mr. O'Connor's personal objects, and is closed against you the moment your views and opinions are found to clash with those objects. If Mr. John Fielden will not become security for Mr. O'Connor at

one time, and if at another Mr. Thomas Fielden will not be a party to a more barefaced act of robbery at Mr. O'Connor's bidding they are both of them to be held up to public ignominy and execration.

Will all these things suffice to satisfy you of hollowness and emptiness of all party professions? If you would benefit your country, you must begin each man with his own heart, and go on each in his own way, where he is and as he best can do it, to do good to his own neighbourhood. Your associations, if you have any, should be open to men of all opinions, who should be free to say what they in their judgment and conscience believe to be the best and the most likely to answer the end desired; and when men are really in earnest to do good there will be very little difference of opinion about the right way of doing it. By their fruits you shall know them. Should these views interest you, I will resume the subject, and show you how men may unite on good principles and for good objects.

J. R. S.

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## CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF THE PRESENT DAY.

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MY DEAR SIR,---I am glad to hear from my friends Hilton and Clapham, that you have begun openly to preach to others the truths you have found so wholesome and strengthening to your own mind. It always rejoices me to witness the spread of Godly knowledge, in a way that cannot but render its successful influence upon the public mind sure and lasting.

Men of your mould, whose understanding is as free from superstition as from fanaticism, when they once take up a work like this, bid fair to go on steadily and boldly, without weariness from within, without fear from without; whilst the changes they are the means of bringing about in the hearts and lives of their fellow men, may be expected to yield, in a comparatively short space of time, abundant proof of the divine character of the renovating doctrines they so earnestly press upon the attention of mankind.

I am far from undervaluing the importance of the services rendered to society, in a moral and religious point of view, by men of learning and eloquence, who employ the

higher powers and endowments of their more vigorous minds in endeavouring to raise and improve the condition of the human race. Natural gifts, of thought and of speech, when still further enriched by the varied stores of acquired knowledge have a mighty effect upon the general mind, when brought to bear upon the moral character of a people. Men thus endowed give tone and direction to the opinions and habits of their contemporaries. Sometimes they do more; they may be said to create a new world of mind, very often greatly in advance of the age in which they live, they give birth to ideas that struggle hard for existence under the adverse circumstances that surround them, but having survived these shocks and overcome all difficulties, they eventually become the adopted and permanent opinions of mankind. But men of this sort are but rare. Other men of another sort are quite as necessary, as they are—are in fact indispensable to the good work of social regeneration. Men of like mind, of similar habits of thought, speech, and mode of life with the great mass must come forward and be fellow workers together with God in rousing the world from its slumbers, and guiding men in the right way. Our notions of the character, qualifications, operations and influences of the Christian ministry of the present day need much correction. We have wandered very far away from the scripture model. It is high time we returned to it and attempted to follow it more accurately. I sincerely hope that you and hundreds like you will take up the cross, and widely yet boldly preach the truth as it is in Jesus. You will meet with many hindrances and be covered with reproach, but no matter, go on, sow the good seed, and, though you may not be allowed to reap, the harvest will be gathered in by those who come after. I write these few lines to encourage you to persevere. Seek the truth, love the truth, live the truth, spread the truth, and the truth will cover the earth with blessings as the waters cover the great deep.

Let those fall out and fight that have nothing better to do. Look above all such work as this. Giving no heed to them, pull away, work away, and time will soon show who has been right and who has been wrong.

I began this letter on Saturday but was obliged to lay

it aside. Benton will tell you why. I finish it to day that he may take it with him. My chief thought and prayer about you now is that you may go steadily on with the good work of God. What you have ever known me I still am, the same as I have ever shewn myself amongst you. I make the most of my time and hope one day to mingle amongst you again, to hear what you have *done* and to tell you what I *think*.

I am, yours very truly,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*Chester Castle, Oct. 12th. 1839.*

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## HINTS FOR AFTERTHOUGHT.

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

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### I.

The round of the heart is, after all, but a narrow one.—One or two feelings, and not many more opinions, make up the amount of what we think and brood over. We sometimes fancy ourselves escaping into unknown and unbounded tracts; but we soon find them to have been often trodden by others, whilst they soon become worse than familiar to ourselves. We take refuge in change—sudden transitions or endless repetitions. But all is vain—we must come home again. Our Heaven or Hell is within—soon seen—known—felt. Rich and poor are both alike in this—neither can go away from himself, or call in friend to his aid. *Thou must be either wretched or happy in Thyself—in Thyself alone.*

### II.

Some men have a strange power to charm. Without meaning to pre-engage, to woo or win, they accomplish at once what another has long tried to do, but tried in vain. Unwitting of any bent or wish to love them—nay often in spite of vows and much struggling against the rising feeling, it bears us onward and away, as by some hidden force that may be neither gainsaid or withstood. Canst thou analyse and delineate the workings of this Feeling? Hast thou power to say to it, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.”

STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

APRIL, 1840.

## SOME PASSAGES OF THE LIFE OF A PARISH PRENTICE AT LITTON AND CRESSBROOK MILLS.—

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.—PART II.—SECOND APPRENTICESHIP.

Cressbrook Mill stands on the East side of the river Wye. It is walled in. All communication with the highway is prevented by a wall three yards high. A pair of large gates with stone pillars, lets in and out as they think proper. Inside the walls are the Mills, the Prentice House and the Master's House. It is about a mile and a half from Litton Mill, three miles from Tydeswell, and four from Bakewell. It lies in a dale called Monsal Dale.— There is a spring rises from under a hill called Wardlaw, which forms a large brook, noted for growing water-cresses; and which I suppose, has given it the name of Cressbrook. There is a number of cottages built about three quarters of a mile from the mills for the families to live in, that work for wages. They are built between two hills, Wardlaw Hill and Frith Hill, rising five or six hundred feet in height. The flat or bottom where the houses stand is *not above* 40 yards wide, and there are two rows of houses built across. There is no communication with the highroad except a small one just for their convenience. Wardlaw Hills hangs over the houses frightful to see. These houses are shut out from all the world and go by the name of "Bury-me-

wick." The Prentice House is a large building three stories high, very lofty, and five windows in length. The entrance for the boys is the West end. Inside are two rows of wooden props like pillars in a factory. The building is about twelve yards wide. There is a table, a fixture, about two feet broad and about four yards in length, goes from the wall to each prop and a form, also a fixture, on each side, at which ten or twelve on each side can sit to eat their meat. At the end of every table is a little cupboard, built into the wall, to put any thing in that the lads may have. There is a lock and key which the boy, who sits next the wall, takes care of. Each boy had his own seat at meal-times. There are ten tables in the room, and all were well filled with children, when I was there. There was no fire place in any part of the building. We never saw a fire either summer or winter. There was a steam pipe, hung up about three yards from the ground, same as a steam-pipe in a factory. There was a small boiler, by the side of the building to heat it. We went in by a pair of large doors ; turning to the right was the dining room ; turning to the left out of the dining room was the necessary for at least two hundred boys. It had only two, or at least three seats. These doors were locked every night at a certain time by the watchman. We were all fastened in. When we came from the factory at night, we all took our seats and the master, Newton, came in and called every name. We answered to our names. Then they brought our suppers. The girls apartment was situated on the South front of the building, a story above us. We had no communication with them at all. Their tables were fitted up the same as ours, and all the other things just the same as ours was. Our bedchamber was an old building attached to the 'Prentice House. It used to be the old 'Prentice House. The girls sleeping place was in the upper part of the 'Prentice House. Our beds consisted of a large wooden case, something like to a cart-frame or a packing case with boarded bottom and boarded sides and ends. A parting board came down the middle East and West : we lay three together, on each side of the bed North and South, six in the double bed. The case or box was filled with straw, covered with a kind of rough sheet. The pillow

and bolster were flocks. Over us were sheet, blanket and coverlid. I have seen it, when they changed the straw, just the same as tossing straw up for horses. We slept in different rooms. One was called the "stone pit." It was on the ground floor, flagged. It was made out of the old 'Prentice House dining room. In the room I slept in, which was the smallest there were twenty-four of us. In the largest there were about fifty. I believe the girls all slept in one large room. The watchman used to come up at night with his lanthorn to see if any of us was missing. He then went down and locked the doors. He used to come up at half-past five in the morning with his lanthorn in the winter time, and walk through all the chambers, lighting some lamps to dress us by. He had a big stick, with which he struck the bed to waken us. The kitchen places with the boilers and bakestands were separate buildings communicating with each other. We went to our work at six in the morning, without anything at all to eat, or fire to warm us. For about a year after I went, we never stopt for breakfast. The breakfast was brought to the mill in tin cans on large trays. It was milk porridge and oatcake. They brought them into the room, and every one took a tin and eat his breakfast, as he could catch it, working away all the while. We stopt at twelve o'clock and had an hour for dinner, but had the cleaning to do during that time. It took some of us half an hour to clean and oil the machinery. We went to dinner, which was potatoe-pie five days in the week, Wednesday was meat and potatoes with oatcake, Saturday was what we called hash; potatoes and meat hashed together with oatcake and cheese. This was the diet all the year round. Our food was cleaner and better and more of it than at Litton. At one o'clock we went to work again and worked on till about eight at night, when we stopt and went to our milk porridge again. About twelve months after I came, there was a fresh act, which obliged them to allow us half an hour for breakfast and give over at half-past seven at night. That was twelve hours a day, except on Saturday when we worked a little shorter. I worked there about twelve months before they would allow me and the other boys, who came from Taddington Parish, any fresh clothes, or so

much as mend those we brought with us. We were nearly naked, without shoes or stockings. One winter's morning after breakfast four of us set off just as we were without shoes or stockings, for we had worn them out, over the hills covered with snow, back to Taddington. We went to the "Old Sergeants," the overseer, and told him what we had come for. But we had no need to tell him; for he saw the ragged state we were in. He gave us something to eat, and went with us back the same day. He made some kind of a contract with Newton, and we got new things and after that we had our clothes just the same as the other 'Prentices. Newton always kept two tailors on the ground, They were Thomas Knowles and his son from Litton. They mended and made for the whole. They reckoned to allow us a fustian suit every year. The first suit I had was of blue fustian and on every button was stamped "Cressbrook Mills." He likewise kept a shoemaker and his apprentice to make and mend as might be wanted. When in London we were told what roast beef and plumb pudding we should have. But in all the time I was at both these mills I only once saw a piece of beef. That was at Litton one Christmas. We had been told of this beef for many a week before hand, and used to talk together about it as the most wonderful and joyful thing that could befall us, to have a piece of roast beef. When at length it came, it was put down to be roasted over the fire during the night. The girls who sat up to roast it were frightened by a boggard and left the beef, which was burnt to a cinder long before morning. I well remember how we gooded ourselves upon this christmas treat. "Well is the beef come? When will it come?" was our constant enquiry from day to day. But alas! we saw nothing of it but the ashes, to which it was reduced. We never tasted flour bread except once a year, Christmas eve, when we had what we called a flour cake, dry without butter, which at Cressbrook Mill we never tasted. We had about a pint of ale at Christmas eve, which was the only time we tasted anything stronger than water, if it could be called stronger. To have seen us walking up and down fiburishing the flour-cake in one hand and the can of ale in the other would have made any one think we were the happiest mortals in the world.

We felt ourselves for once as big as the king. The spice pudding, of which we were told so many tales, never came but once a year and then only consisted of a lump of cold, sad, suetty pudding with two or three currants and raisins in it.

During the time I was at Cressbrook Mr. Newton would not have had less than four hundred 'Prentices. My number was two hundred and fifty three of boys. All our clothes were numbered or ticketed from the hat to the shoe, so that if any thing happened to be done in the farmers' grounds or fields, the farmer had nothing to do but lay hold on something belonging to us and then the culprit was found out. There were prentices from several London Parishes, from St. Giles, Clerkenwell, Marylebone, Duke of York's school &c. The boys said they were told before they came what sport they would have among the hills, catching hares and rabbits, and fishing in the brooks and streams. But we found ourselves sadly mistaken, for I have sometimes gone into the Frith or the Twitches on a summer's night when the master has seen us or some one has told him, he used to send for us up in to the counting-house or cellar room half a dozen at a time, or as many as have been in the woods birdnesting. He would ask us what we had been doing there. We told him birdnesting or nutting. He would then order the watchman, Hancock or Brown to go into Wardlaw wood for half a dozen hazel sticks. Then he ordered the watchman to strip us, made us mount on one another's backs, and would himself flog us with these hazel sticks across our bare buttocks and loins till he cut the flesh and made the blood flow. He also made us flog one another, and would stand over us to see that we laid on; and if we did not lay on hard enough, he laid on us himself. On a summers' evening he would go to the top of the factory to see if any of us were away fishing in the brook. The water was low in the summer-time and we used to grope about at the bottom of the stream, but scarce a morning came but some of us had to repent our hardihood. One night in particular I can remember me and a lad named Henry Gilbert went up to the master's garden before his house on a summer's night, when roses were in full-bloom. Henry and me plucked two or three roses. On coming home we met the watchman, who asked us where we had gotten these roses from.

We told him off a tree beside the master's house. We begged him not to tell the master. He promised he would not. Next morning soon after breakfast he sent for us up into the counting-house. He asked what we had been plucking their roses off the tree for. We told the best tale we could to get off. But no matter, we must both be flogged. He ordered the watchman to strip me first. He then got hold of my two arms over his back turned my shirt over my back, and cut my thigh so severely with the lapping over of the stick, that he fetched the flesh off nearly every stroke. The blood ran down my leg. He gave me about thirty of these blows. He laid on till he was tired. Stiff and bloody I was ordered to button up and go to my work. I was for weeks and could hardly walk. I went limping about as if I was lame. I had nothing to put on it but factory oil to keep it moist. My shirt and trowsers kept sticking to it. It was very sore and painful. I could find half a dozen now living within a few miles that were treated in the same way.

We were told in London that we should often be allowed to come over and see our friends. But once in there was no getting out. I remember one James Bailey, a very steady hardworking lad as any in the mill, from his youth of a very quiet and religious turn. This boy had a brother in Birmingham. He himself was from Bristol. We had a lot of apprentices from Bristol. He set off to see his brother, intending to return. When he got to Birmingham he found himself advertised as a runaway apprentice, and on his return, three weeks after he had set out, he was taken by Newton to Tydeswell before the Magistrates and sentenced to two months imprisonment in the House of Correction. So much for liberty to see our friends.

I worked on in this way for about three or four years. I was getting up into a young fellow, somewhere about seventeen years old. I went to him one morning and said, "Master, am I not nearly out of my time and at liberty to go." He said, "at liberty! no." I asked him whether he had any indentures. He said, "Why?" I answered, I had heard that Mr. Needham, my former master, had destroyed the indentures, or otherwise had refused to deliver them up to any one else. He asked me who had told me

that I said, I had heard it so said. He was looking just then into a book of figures ; but, as soon as I said this, he jumped up, catched me a blow with his fist on the side of the head, and began to kick me with his foot. I got up, and ran down stairs, he after me. I run out of the factory, and he after me. He caught me 40 or 50 yards from the factory, and collared me, and dragged me back to the factory, clouted me, and sent me to my work. I then took and wrote a letter, and sent it to the Bethnal-green overseers, to know what time I had to stop. They sent me a letter back again in a few weeks, that I should be out of my time some time in that year. When the time came, I took the letter and gave it him. He said, "Well, I was at liberty." I then gave over. Thus ended my seven years' apprenticeship there.

I had neither money nor clothes but my Sunday suit, and went to him and asked him to give me a trifle of money to carry me up with. He grumbled very much, but at last he gave me half-a-crown. I was highly favoured, for most who left got nothing at all, and were thankful enough to get away. I left, came up to Stockport, had no money, knew no one, save one or two companions who had gone that way before me. I was a stranger walking about seeking work. My business was that of a rover. But being a stranger it was difficult to get any employment. I tramped up and down Stockport, Manchester, and other towns about a month very badly off. In Manchester I fell in with this Newton my old master, about Ardwick Green. He was on a coach coming to Manchester. He saw me and beckoned to me. I got into the coach. He asked me if I had got any work. I said no. He said if I liked to go back he would find me a job for the winter. So I went back for I was as near clemmed when I saw him as made no matter. I remember having a lump of hay in my fist when I saw him, I chewed it to keep off hunger. I went back, and he set me to my old job. I lived in lodgings at a farm house, with a man called Andrew Broom. I worked the fortnight, and when he come to reckon he gave me ten shillings a week, after having served an apprenticeship to a trade. I went to him about it. He said, "oh very well, I might please myself. There were plenty would do it for less."

The winter was coming, and I had no-where to go, nothing to take too, so I staid. The wages he gave me would not keep me. After paying my lodging I had not enough for food. My clothes and shoes were getting all worn out. One of the lads, John Mc. Kaye, swapped shoes with me. Newton got to hear of it. He sent for me into the counting house, and asked me to go down and bring the shoes up. He said he would find me a faster shop. He would put me where he could find me. He locked me in there from eight o'clock till the labouring men gave over at night. At night he gave me in charge to two men Simpson and Bennet, who were to take me off to the house of correction. He had made it up with these men, when they got me on the road, for one of them to stop behind and tell me to run that I might not be taken. Thomas Simpson did so. He said, "if I were you I would run." I said, "I will," and off I set, jumped over the wall into the plantation, and stopped till they were gone. I went down the plantation to Litton Mill, the old place. It was stopped. It was dark. I crossed the broadwater there with my clothes on up to the middle. It rained very heavily. I knew where the shallowest place was. I had three miles to go over the hills, in the rain and dark to Taddington, when I went that night. I went to an old man's house, the same who used to be an overlooker of prentices. He gave me something to eat and found me some old bags to lie on. I lay on these bags on the house floor in my wet clothes all night. Next morning I proceeded again to Stockport. I fell in with a lad called Barton. I told him my case how I was. He took me home to their house—told my case to his mother. She took me in and gave me something to eat, found me a good bed, and was very kind to me. She went with me next day seeking work. This we did for three weeks, she finding me victuals and finding me a home. I then got work at a factory, Ashton's, in Portwood. I lived with her all the time I stopped at Stockport. She was a mother to me. Whenever I go to Stockport I always go to see her, and sometimes she comes to see me.

## SADNESS.

ADDRESSED TO \* \* \* \* \*

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

I.  
I cannot tell thee why,  
But oh! my heart is sad;  
And long hours may linger by,  
E'er again my heart be glad.

II.  
It is not sin—the sin  
A guilty conscience feels;  
The worm that gnaws within,  
The wound that never heals.

III.  
Nor is it grief—for I  
Was never doomed to mourn  
A friend, or watch one die  
Whom I would wish return.

IV.  
It is not sickly gloom,  
Weighing down the weary soul,  
Ever pointing to the tomb,  
As life's cold and cheerless goal.

V.  
Nor do I e'er repine,  
And charge God foolishly,  
Wishing another's wealth were mine,  
Myself as great as he.

VI.  
It is not that I sigh  
For the fair things I've seen; i  
Sights, sounds, and all will die,  
And scarce tell where they've been.

VII.  
Nor is it that I fear  
Dark days, that soon may come;  
What heeds the wanderer here,  
Who is hastening to his home?

VIII.  
I have no aching at my heart,  
When my thoughts are of the grave;  
God has soothed its latest smart,  
And I feel him strong to save.

IX.  
Unbidden ghosts will glower,  
Sad thoughts will sometimes crowd,  
Sent to mock our trusted power,  
Oh! how can man be proud!

X.  
Then do not ask me why  
My heart is sometime sad;  
At thy smile the dark dreams fly—  
It is past, and we are glad.

## PASTORAL ADDRESS.

MY DEAR SIR,—Next to the pleasure I have in hearing from old and tried friends, whose love I know to be unshaken, is perhaps that of hearing from those who like yourself, are personal strangers to me, but who yet, and with right, lay claim to an acquaintance with me on the strength of the great likeness there is between our respective opinions, arising, as they do me the honour to say, in part at least, if not principally, out of the new direction that has been given to their minds by means of those principles of truth, which I have, if weakly, yet most earnestly pressed home upon their attention.

You, it seems, are one of the many hundreds, may I not say thousands, of the plain, homely men of this country, who, having heard the Holy Book read up as it stands written, and spoken from as the unfettered understanding at once shews to be right, and the mind, free from all foredoom, sees to be good, have begun to search the heavenly writing for yourself, that you might therein find everlasting life as brought to light by Him of whom it bears witness, and who alone is the way, the truth, and the life of men. It has ever been my leading, almost my only aim, to set my hearers upon this work. I knew how easy it was to make followers, and build up a sect; but, thank God, my heart always shuddered at the wickedness, as my mind rose above the littleness and empty outside shew of being the head of one of the thousand and one, so called, religious bodies with which the land is overrun. Instead, therefore, of doing anything to induce men to join themselves to me, and pin their faith upon my sleeve, I ever stood aloof from this kind of leadership, and strove rather to bring all, to whichsoever of the jarring creeds and warring churches they might belong, to hear, read, think, mark, and learn for themselves, asking wisdom of God, who has promised to guide all aright that walk in the way he sets before them. It is a poor and beggarly thing to be worshipped and looked up to by the gaping, thoughtless crowd—growing greater, like the snowball, as it rolls along, and, like it too, melting as suddenly away. Such is ever the rise and fall, the beginning and the end of narrowminded, half-thinking, hot-

headed sectarian parties. They come and go like the fleeting, everchanging cloud, whilst the clear blue of the upper heaven of truth, though sometimes and for awhile it may be overcast, is still the same, beautiful and bright, and fails not to show itself again, lovelier than before for the sky-mists and dark weather shrouds that hid it from the sight. The truth can never be destroyed ; nor can untruth make good the shortlived hold it takes of the wandering and misguided mind of man. Oh ! how lofty, then, and ennobling is the thought, that we may be helpful to one another in threading our way out of the crosspaths of error, and gaining the kingly road of abiding truth ! I am thankful that, in this respect, I have had it in my power to be of some service to yourself and the many more of whom you speak. You say, that, when you began to hear me, you belonged to the Methodist society, and that, during the whole time you attended my ministry, you cannot call to mind that I ever recommended you to leave that society. This is quite true. I never did so, either in your case or in the case of any other. In the whole course of my connexion with the Wesleyan body, I never exhorted people to become members of the society as *the way of salvation* ; nor, since I withdrew from it, have I ever advised them to leave it on the same account. On the contrary, I have invariably urged the members of all religious parties to carry their thoughts and feelings, whether in the shape of doubts, fears, inquiries, impressions, or purposes, to their own bandmates, leaders, teachers, and spiritual pastors—that, if in the wrong, they might be set right, and, if right, might, as leaven in the meal, leaven the whole lump of which they formed a part. You have, however, through what stages I know not, seen fit to leave the Methodist society. You say, that, after searching the word of God for yourself, you think you understand it much better than you did formerly, and continue, up to this day, to feel an inward, settled peace, only to be gained by those who have become one with God in the way laid down and set open for them in his blessed word. I rejoice that such is your knowledge of the goodness and strength of the groundwall whereon you build ; such the hope you have one day to see the top-stone put on with shouts of heavenly joy.

That you should begin to tell others what God has done for you is right and well. Your brethren have called upon you to take your share in the work in which they are engaged ; and you have answered them as a young, fearful, but warm-hearted servant of the Lord should have done. You have offered yourself to them ; but, at the same time, you look around you for guidance and help in your new and difficult undertaking. I shall say but little to you at present : may that little lead you, through thought and prayer, to much more and much higher knowledge than I can give you.

1. As the ground of all, you must yourself grow in the "life of God ;" that is, you must wax daily in knowledge and true holiness. These two must increase together. Some ministers become very learned, but the soul is dead : others are very pious, but their understanding is stunted, all headwork is at a stand, and they foolishly think to make up for the want of wisdom by living a holy, spotless life. Head and heart, mind and soul, should grow up together, twin branches from Christ, the living vine root, on whom our whole being should be grafted.

2. Let your own experience, rather than the experience of others, in the things of God, be the leading thread of your ministrations. Learn of God, and follow him in all things ; follow no man, not even the wisest, save as he follows Christ. Gain all the knowledge you can, wherever it may be had ; but do not imitate or copy them from whom ye learn it. Be a man for yourself, and not a led ape.

3. If you attend to this, you will neither be a contemptible imitator of any man, nor a blind, thick-and-thin subscriber to any given creed, nor will you, like a parrot, talk to others about things you do not understand yourself. From your own mind, your own heart, your own life, your own knowledge, arising out of your own observation and reflection, you will speak sound words which cannot be gainsaid—home truths which cannot be withheld.

4. You will, in this case, clothe your thoughts in plain words. Men who know what they are talking about are easy to be understood. We cannot tell what many preachers are after, because they do not know themselves what they really mean. Their minds are covered with mist ; and

if they are right now and then, it is only by chance, and it is mingled with so much wrong that it does little good, often a great deal of harm. The best things are level to the work-day minds of the bulk of mankind, and the loftiest thoughts may be told in the homeliest speech. The style and language of the pulpit has become almost unintelligible to the generality of men. They are as much baffled in trying to gather the meaning as they would be in a French church or in a Hindoo temple. Men ought to be spoken to on the Sunday in the same words that they speak and listen to on the other six days in the week. Our Lord and his Apostles knew how to speak to the people; and although they brought strange things to the ears of the multitude, those who would might search and find out whether they were true or not. So with the old preachers in this country. At and about the time of the Reformation, and even still later than that, the greatest amongst them, bishops being at their head, spoke from the pulpit or the market cross so that the whole people could understand them. The things they talked about were such as were suited to the wants, bodily and spiritual, of the people at large, and of the poor more especially, whom they looked upon as their peculiar charge, and these things they set forth in the plainest, strongest, and most impressive language which our mother English could supply them with; and they were mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds. God was with them, and the truths they spake grew and multiplied.

5. Study the word of God, therefore, not only to see what you should say, but how you should say it. Next to the matter of your discourses is the manner of them. Remember you are the mouth through which God speaks to man. Ask yourself how it is most likely the Son of Man, were he standing where you stand, would talk to that handful or that crowd of the poor and the outcasts from mankind? Such would be the things, new or old, he would set before them; and such the words he would choose by which to make his meaning so clear that he that ran might read, and the wayfarer, though a fool, might have no need to err. Go thou and do likewise.

6. As to what you ask about the connexion between

religion and politics, I refer you to the Scripture and your own common sense. The word of God, we are told, is profitable for all things, instruction, correction, reproof, &c., that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished with every good word and work. What is religion? The string by which the earth is hung on heaven—the golden band by which the soul is, as it were, tied to God. God sheds his love abroad in our hearts—and that love leads us in all things so to act as becometh godliness. Religion, Godward, is the worship of a holy heart; manward, the even tenour of a holy life. In whatsoever state we are, we shall, if religious, do the will of God on earth, or strive, and will and pray that we may do it; even as the angels which are in heaven. What are politics, properly so called? The management of nations, as economics are the management of families. There are laws for the one, and laws for the other likewise, and for both the word of God supplies the best of all; in fact, the only good laws. True religion supplies the principle, is itself the principle of all right action, according to the state we are in and the circumstances that surround us. It shews the child what he should do to his father—the father what he should do to his child: the master what he should do to his workmen and housefolk, and these again what they should do to their master: and so of kings to those who are under them, in the law and in the Lord, and of each member of the commonweal to the various orders of the magistracy, by whom the law is to be righteously administered. It is not hard to understand, however hard it may be to do this. God has laid down one and the same law to all, changing only, or rather varied, according to the relative position of each as he stands towards another. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and do unto another what thou wouldest have him do unto thee,” is the law for the king’s heart and the heart of the husbandman; for the king’s house and for the cottage of the dantal workman; for child, woman, man; for each and for every one of us. All our duties should be set before us; before the one as well as before the other; and the man of God will speak as the mouth of the Lord has told him to speak, fearless, whom he rouse up in rage against him for his holy boldness. Again I bid you go to the book itself for example

and direction. Whatsoever things were written afore time were written for our learning. You will see from Moses to Christ and from Christ to John, how all, who have been "sent of God," have spoken the whole counsel of God.

You say you have to battle very hard with some ministers on this subject. I am glad of it. I rejoice that the question has at length been so put that it must have an answer. Embrace every opportunity of conversing, in the most friendly spirit, with religious teachers and their followers, however called, on the great question---What is the will of God concerning us all, and how is that will to be done? In what way, by what steps, can we unitedly bring glory to God in the highest, and upon earth spread peace and good-will amongst men.

You see how God is opening one door after another for the preaching of his word and the spread of saving truth. You have now a call to . Answer the call. There are enough of you to do much more good than has yet been done in the whole region round about you. I trust that such young men as yourself, under the direction of your elders, will fill up every hour you can snatch from business in bringing your fellow-men to a knowledge of the truth in all its branches, and urging them to apply it as God gives them opportunity and power. Build one another up in knowledge, wisdom, goodness and love. Be of one heart, of one mind. Be strong in the Lord, and in all things quit you like men.

I have given you such hints as occurred to me from the perusal of your letter. You are most welcome to all the time and thought I can devote to the interesting subjects on which you request my opinion, and will see that from what I have already written that I am anxious to furnish you with every assistance in my power. Give my love to the friends with whom you associate for mutual improvement. Your progress may not be rapid, for you have much to struggle with; but go on, and you will gain some ground, however little, every day. You are well employed. God bless you, and make you a blessing.

I am, truly yours,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, Feb. 24, 1840.*

## LETTER TO A FRIEND.

MY DEAR SIR,---You have perhaps thought me long in answering your kind letter of the 12th, this being the 21st of the month. You would have heard from me sooner, had had I not been unwell, and not at all in the humour for letter-writing. The weather here has been very unhealthy; mild, moist and sickly, almost beyond any thing I ever remember at this season of the year. The consequence has been that nearly every body has been more or less ill, of what, now-a-days I believe, is called the influenza, but what used to be called a bad cold. I have had my share amongst the rest; sore throat, slow fever, and so on. But I am getting about again, and begin, with the return of my usual health, to feel as lively and cheerful as ever; so much so, that you need not wonder if you have a thundering letter from me at your quarterly meeting. I thought I would just drop you a line or two to-day, to acknowledge the receipt of your favour above referred to, and assure you of my intention to reply much more at length. The bad cold I have had is the only ailment I have had since I came here, and had I not been here, instead of one I should most likely have had a dozen, in the progress of my accustomed labours amongst you. At the same time, I must say our sleeping cells are not altogether the sort of bedchambers a man would be apt to choose for himself. The cast-iron stairs are covered with water, which likewise trickles down from the walls, so that it may be soaked up with a mop. The cell itself is so damp that the coverlid in the morning is nearly as wet as grass on which the night dew has fallen. The stone walls send out the queerest kind of damp I ever felt in my life; it beats upon one in chill puffs, and seems to work itself into the very bones. To be locked up in a stone box like this for thirteen hours out of the twenty-four, will try what stuff a man is made of. If a man can stand this, he can stand any thing; and I hope not to be much the worse for it in the end. I am glad to hear you are so much better off in the neighbourhood of Ashton than is the case in many parts of the country. Give my love to all my friends, and to my foes too, if I have any, that you know of. "Christmas comes but once a-year;" then let all be merry.

for that once, forgetting their own griefs and forgiving each others' offences. We spent a merry Christmas together last year; I hope we shall spend as merry a one this year, though we are thus asunder. Make one another as happy as you can, and God bless you all. Have no fear for me, for

“ Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage,  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for a hermitage.”

In most affectionately wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year, believe me your very happy friend and servant,

JOS. R. STEPHENS.

*The “Castle,” Chester. Dec. 21, 1839.*

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#### TO THE SOCIETY AND CONGREGATIONS OF THE ASHTON CIRCUIT.

I have once more had the pleasure to welcome within my narrow but happy home—the friends, whom your kind and unchanging friendship has sent to refresh and cheer me. I was glad to see them for their own sake, and for yours also. You would not, under present circumstances, have deputed two more appropriate representatives than the brethren who left me yesterday. I was not a little moved by the reflection, that in all probability they will in a few months, be similarly situated with myself, though in a gaol much worse than this. Two worthy ministers of the gospel shortly about to be added to the number of those, who, for principle and conscience, are fast filling the gaols of this country. But their minds seem fully made up to bear the sufferings that are about to befall them, in a spirit every way becoming the high and holy calling, which, so far from being ashamed or afraid to acknowledge, they look upon it as their greatest glory to be reckoned worthy of. These men have neither done nor said any thing they would draw back again; were it in their power to do so. As the followers and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, they have been striving to bring near to their fellow-men, especially the needy and the outcast, that “acceptable year of the Lord,” the marks of whose coming, are preaching deliverance to the captives---the opening of the prison doors to

them that are bound---glad tidings of great joy to all---and to the poor above all the rest. If it be wrong to understand---and take into our hearts the things, that "were written aforetime for our learning," then are these men wrong in the sight they have gotten of the learning of God's holy word. If it be evil and blame-worthy to follow out into good deeds those blessed truths, which have been thus graven on the heart ---to go about doing good unto the souls and bodies of our poor and helpless brethern---then are these men guilty of having done what they ought not to have done, and deserve to be beaten with stripes. But it is not wrong---it is not evil---it is not blame-worthy to act as they have acted. They have done nothing worthy of ban or of bonds. On the other hand they would be guilty before God, had they not done His bidding, lifting up their voices against the hard task-master---the proud oppressor and all others of every stand in life, who reproach their maker by refusing justice and deneying mercy to the poor. Durham and Johnson, my dear friends and fellow-workmen in the cause of truth, I rejoice to find you are not afraid of them, whose power reaches only to the body---nor even to that one jot beyond the permission and controul of our heavenly Father. They fear Him, who has power to cast both body and soul into hell. This holy being raises them above all lower, lesser dread---and they are happy in the prospect of the bonds and imprisonment, that in all probability await them. I commend them both to your fellow-feeling and support. You are not so poor but you can do something for them, be it ever so little. It is not the amount, but the feeling which inspires the resolution to raise it, that commands our admiration and secures our lasting gratitude. There are one or two others, who, though not immediately connected with you as members are nevertheless closely identified with you in the general course you have taken, in pursuing the public good. These likewise have claims upon your sympathy and affection, which I hope will not be overlooked. Your first duty should have respect to those, who are nearest and dearest to you, but should not terminate with them. Remember that you are not a sect. Beware of the insidious approaches of the ensnaring spirit of sectarianism, whatever the deceptive shape it may assume.---

good of mankind according to His holy word. I exhort you to walk by the same rule---to mind the same things. If you do this---in all likelihood you will, in the coming year, see far greater things done than have been done in the past year. Give yourselves more fully to God, to learn of Him and to walk before Him, and to love Him. Knit yourselves more closely and lovingly to one another. Be of one heart and mind. Keep truth, righteousness and love ever before you. Seek after---find and follow, that which is good and that only. In religion, bear in mind you are not a sect---in politics never belong to a party. The word of God thrown open before a sound understanding, which works as bidden by a lowly, guileless, loving-heart, will lead you in the right way in all things. I have never striven or wished to be your master. Keep from every thing, and shun every one that would lead you into strifes and wars about the masters. "One is your master." There is none other that He, "even Christ," and those who teach and do, what He taught and did.

Many of you are suffering want, the hardest of all our sufferings, because least of all under our control. It is hard to know what to say to such. Individual want may be borne patiently, because there is the hope that it may be relieved effectually. But when hunger becomes widely spread, when it eats into whole neighbourhoods and knows the heart of an entire nation, there is an end of all endurance. It seems fast coming to this. I have long warned the rich and great of its approach. They would not give any heed to what I told them, and now that the danger is at the door, staring them in the face and forcing itself into their abode, they are at their wits' end. They know not what to do. But we are only at the beginning of our troubles. Bear those that fall to your individual share, as you best may, like christains---but be on the watch. Do not fall asleep, or grow heedless of what is happening around you. God has a great work to do in England. The next year will see much of it wrought out by an almighty hand.

Be up, therefore, and be doing. Not one of you but may in something be helpful to the good of the rest.---preachers, leaders, stewards, secretaries, teachers, whatever your office if you are thought worthy to teach, guide and

But I have the fullest confidence in you. You will not fail in this, as in many other matters, to be guided by the wisdom, that is profitable to direct you.

Your representatives have only delivered to me your quarterly contingent towards my support as still your minister---apologizing at the same time for the comparative smallness of its amount. Allow me to thank you for what you have so generously atchieved, and for what I know you would have done to a much greater extent had it been in your power. For the future, let there be no apologies on this subject. Money, either less or more, is not the bond, that unites us together. I accept what you can conveniently raise for me as a mark of your love for me, your trust in me, and as a token of what I know it is in your heart to do for me had you the ability. What you have sent me on this occasion will lighten the load I sometimes feel to be rather heavier than I can very well bear. I have been greatly blessed ever since I bade farewell to fortune, on my entrance upon the narrow path of truth and right against the world. I have two or three several times, as you well know, cast myself penniless upon the providence of God, when called to choose between earthly good and what I looked upon as the cause of God. Though I have since that time often been in straits I have never known want--- Some way or other has always opened to me---and even now I am not afraid but that I shall see through my present trials---and even more, as a feeble but zealous soldier in the army of righteousness, and up with thousands of you, who are like-minded, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

This is the last day of the year. It has been a strange one. Many a seed has ripened into harvest---and many a seed of a still further in-gathering has been sown during the last twelve months. We have not lived in vain---we have not spent our strength for nought---we are not suffering in vain. Call up the past and carefully look over all that has happened within your ken. Two things, I think, will strike you with much force---first, how rapidly events are hurrying us on to some great, if not awful change---and second how conspicuously the hand of God has been seen in shaping the character and course of those events, however gloomy for a time the look-out may have been, to the

govern others---members, friends, neighbours, old, young, male, female, each one where God has placed him may spread abroad the knowledge themselves have gained. Be good---be kind---full of love in wishing to bless---and full of life in taking the best way of communicating that blessing to those that stand in need of it.

I am very happy where I am. Whenever you think of me---and I know with some of you it will be every day---let us be without a tear---without a sigh. I am where God has sent me---nor in ought, save the natural sorrow which bereavement called forth, have I known one sad hour since I came within these lonely walls. I am very happy, thank God. I hope you are all as happy as I am myself. You cannot be more so. Let us then---together---each of us as we best may, strive in the coming year to do our master's will---and then we hope to enter---if we continue to the end---into our master's joy.

You have three buildings of great value and importance to you as a people. Let them not sink for want of air. Make up in zeal what you are wanting in wealth. If each will do a little, and do it steadily, there will be nothing lacking. Shew your love for the truth, which is amongst you to a greater degree than perhaps in any other part of the country, by making the trustees and other persons responsible for the liabilities upon those buildings, quite easy in their minds, free from all apprehension of any unfavourable termination of the enterprise to which they stand committed.

In your Sunday schools be not afraid of teaching little children bible truth, just as it stands written before their eyes. Train them up in the way they should go. You that are older have many weaknesses, which they will escape, if rightly brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord from their earliest childhood. Teach them that truth is dearer than all besides, and lead them so to fear God that they may one day, if need be, go with their lives in their hand and do the bidding of the only Lawgiver of men. The love of fathers and mothers to their children; of children to their foreelders, to their sisters and brethren; of neighbour to neighbour; of friend and kinsman to his friend is the spring of every social virtue. Implant and cherish their

domestic love. You will then, as fellow-citizens, feel for one another---work for one another---live or die for one another, as God shall shew it to be meet you should.

Be very mindful of your poor neighbours. In your private charity, in your parish vestries, fight their battles manfully. See that they are fed, warmed and housed, as far as they can, happy in their lowly estate. You are not yet cursed with a law which will take it out of your power to help them effectually. I hope this curse is not in reserve for you. There is surely too sound a knowledge of that evil thing, and too great a hatred to it to occasion any fear that you will suffer it to be inflicted upon you. All I ever told you on that subject I would now recall to your recollection and fasten on your heart.

Wishing you all a happy new year, in the favour of God and in the love of all the good, I remain your most affectionate and faithful servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, Dec. 31, 1839.*

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## LETTER TO A FRIEND.

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MY DEAR SIR,—You see what pains are taken by sectarians to spread what they have been taught to think the truth. They leave no stone unturned; but, as Christ says, "they will compass sea and land" to make a proselyte. You smile, (perhaps in pity, or it may be with a feeling of contempt) as you watch their earnest and unwearied efforts to extend the doctrines they have embraced. But is there no lesson to be learned from this? Whilst they, for a faith which is but true in part, and at best mingled with much mistake, make so many sacrifices and exert themselves almost beyond their strength, ought those, who think they hold the whole truth or at least much more of it than the schismatic, to stand idle, heedless of the turn things may take around him, indifferent to the success of the means employed to counteract error and propagate truth. There is much amongst the sects that we cannot but condemn. They make use of many means that are clearly unlawful in them-

selves, or unworthy of the righteous cause in which they are professedly employed. But remember—he who is not always zealously affected in every good thing, is himself a sectarian in the strictest sense of the word: that he is taken up with a part only instead of the whole of the truth. His being is incomplete, and of a lower standard than it ought to be. Be in earnest then, and kindle the fire of true zeal in the breasts of your brethren, the younger ones more especially.

The address of the Females of Hull, to which you refer, is another proof, amongst thousands, of the yearning there is in the hearts of our countrymen every where to have the Book of God made the groundwork of all law, right, freedom and happiness. They may go a little wrong now and then in small things; but in the main they are true-hearted and only want a guide to lead them aright. You should open a correspondence by letter or otherwise with all, near and far away, who you have reason to think, are like-minded with yourselves.

I thank you for your letter. I am always glad to have one from you. As I have written so many letters to Ashton lately, I need add no more than that I continue to remain,

Very truly yours

J. R. STEPHENS.

The "Castle," Chester, Feb. 27, 1840.

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## HINTS FOR AFTERTHOUGHT.

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

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### I.

Every man is to God what Adam was. Kinship and fellowship disappear in the sight of God. Fatherhood and brotherhood are but the outward---and accidental Estates of human nature. As MAN, each one stands out---apart and aloof from every one else; wrought upon by, and himself working with, other Beings, either in good or evil. *To thy own---thy only Master thou must stand or fall now and hereafter.*

## II.

Is there not, after all, some mysterious band or link of union between Name and Thing? Are they not as much and as essentially *one* as Body and Soul? Words are said to be arbitrary signs. We may say so and think so, if we please; but, when we have been taught to feel the ghost or soul which gives such Life to the first-Words, the Root-Sounds, in the Tongue or Speech of every Land, we shall then recognise them as the out-ward body or framework, that everywhere covers the mind with matter. This something in sound, which is not sound, when uttered by the lips of man, is the cause of our exquisitely refined and delicate delight, when listening to the tones of eloquence and music. The sight and sound of words then becomes lovely as the human face divine. We are sweetly-minded of what is within.

## III.

The world has now rolled round for some six thousand years, with an unfailing stock of thinking Beings upon it---interchanging their opinions during life, and then handing down the result of their study and experience to a rising generation, who have gone on re-modelling and carrying forward this store of Thought---and so has every succeeding generation likewise done. There are now about a thousand millions of us on the earth---and yet, with all this helping and being helped, telling and being told, to say nothing of our own individual Powers so much boasted of, what does any one really know---what indeed *can* we know? But little, and that little very imperfectly. There is, however, without doubt, something like this principle of accumulative interest on deposited knowledge. And though the ratio be but a small one, the patrimonial Estate continues to improve upon the whole; and those who step into possession to-day may, if they will, be somewhat richer than those who relinquished their possession yesterday. There is a greater amount of available knowledge, wisdom, and goodness in the world now than there ever was before. Who can foretell what the End will be?

STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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MAY, 1840.

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TO THE LEADERS, TEACHERS, and STEWARDS  
ON QUARTER-DAY ASSEMBLED.

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Allow me a few words with you on the great work you have undertaken; the furtherance and consummation of which it is the object of your present meeting to promote. You have been called to strive together for each other's welfare, here and hereafter; and for the good, as far as your power can reach, of all mankind, God has made known to you in His word and by the Holy Ghost, that His innermost being is love; that in goodness all His works have been wrought; and that the truest worship we can pay to Him is to seek their happiness, whom, with ourselves, He would raise to everlasting bliss. Whatever diversity of sentiments may prevail amongst men in reference to their notions and opinions on matters of doctrinal belief in the abstract, there need be none, there ought to be none, and there must be none, if so be they are followers of Christ, as to those good deeds done to our brother man, whereby we shew the likeness we bear to our father in Heaven, and the kinship we claim to our Healer, Leader and Holy brother Jesus, the one saviour of the world. When He was upon earth it seemed to be the first and the last, the begin-

ning and the ending of all he said, did and suffered, to make us clearly and thoroughly to understand that we could only be learners and followers of His, when we did to others what we would have others do to us; when we displayed the same kind of love to our brethren, fellow-sinners with ourselves, that He, who was without sin, had borne towards us all; and when, having His mind and words within us, we could pray to have our own sins forgiven, even as we felt ourselves willing to forgive the sins of all such as had injured or offended us. When Christ fed the hungry, clothed the naked and gave the thirsty drink; when he poured eye-sight on the blind, made the lame man walk, and raised the dead to life again: and when, kindest and sweetest work of all, He spoke tenderly and comfortably to the poor, sorrowful and broken-hearted wanderers and outcasts of mankind, bidding them be of good cheer for that he brought to them, and to all such as they were, glad tidings of great joy, news of the kingdom of God to be set up here upon earth, wherein righteousness and true holiness should dwell—we cannot, when we have all this before our eyes, be under any mistake as to the way, by which we are bound to prove our fellowship and oneness with the son; as the Son is fellow and one with the Father, who, with the Holy Ghost, is God over all blessed for evermore.

We cannot, indeed, do again the same like works that Christ did when he dwelt amongst men. To think we can is to fall into the dream-snare of those, whose heated mind has led them astray from the pathway of common truth into the wilderness of pious error, where shapes of the imagination are taken for objects of faith, under the influence of which a life, that would otherwise have been filled with good deeds, is spent in unprofitable and oftentimes in very hurtful delusion. But we can, and most assuredly ought to live in the spirit of Christ. The mind that was in Him, may be in us also. And if it be, we shall be led into the healthy truth, truth that will make us whole, and be most wholesome to those, that dwell around us—to all, who can be brought to feel the touch of heaven, that warms the hand of charity, when stretched out to help and bless the poor, the needy, the strayed, and him, who is bound and bowed down in body or in mind. There are those ways especially, in which we may tread in the foot-

steps of our Leader and Head, and, by so-doing, did in the fulfilment of the word he spoke for the consolation and the hope of his household upon earth, when he said to those that looked on with awe as he did all his wonderous works before their eyes, that still greater works than any He had done should be beheld hereafter. It is in our power, first, to keep under our own lust after wealth and the artificial, weakening, soul-killing enjoyments, which wealth places at our disposal. The love of money is the root of all evil. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Were these ground truths of the gospel practised by those, who profess their belief in them ; in other words—were we to moderate our desires, to subdue within us the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, we should still possess the food and the raiment, wherewith we are commanded to be content, suffer no lack in anything, but abound in all that is needed for life and for godliness. We should be a thousand-fold happier than we are—and oh ! what a door for happiness should we open to those of our fellow-men, who must have too little, simply because we will have so very much more than our reasonable wants require, and our christian duty prescribes and enjoins.—How few there are who take this view of their christian obligation ; and yet how earnestly, how impressively, how solemnly has Christ insisted upon it. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth—take no thought for the morrow—seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these thing shall be added unto you. Say whether in any one thing we can more fully shew how entirely we put our trust in God, or how dearly we love our brother, than by thus been thankful for such things as we have, and by holding our hand at the point where the indulgence of our earthly and sensual desires would lead to that covetousness which is idolatry, which begins in mistrusting God, and ends in robbing and oppressing our poorer brother. Do you not see what a principle of divine economy is involved in this christian precept, this holy rule of life ? How immediate, how immense, how progressive would be the change in society, were this one act of faith performed by all believers ! Let us then, in our sphere, according to our ability and with heartliest prayer to God for his bless-

ing, begin to urge this most vital point upon the attention of the christian world. There is the commandment under the law, thou shalt have none other God but me, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbours ; there is the precept under the gospel to seek the heavenly, rather than the earthly riches, and, when we have more than we want and ought to have, to sell and give the over much to the poor, who are so empty only because we are so full ; and there is the life, as well as the word of Christ, who bids us walk in the way that he has set before us. The law, the gospel, the faith and the example of the Son of God all bear upon this point, and meet together in one great impulsive force to conduct us to a practical fellowship with God and with each other very different from the empty form of fellowship in word only and not in deed, which too generally prevails in the church at the present age. The second mode of raising up the fallen poor, giving eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, health the rich and life to the dead, is to make it a part of our daily business to take some thought for others as well as for ourselves. It is right for every man to work with his own hands, that he may eat bread worthily earned. No one has any right to the bread of idleness. But whilst we are up and doing for ourselves, we ought not to forget those that perhaps are not so quick-sighted, so sharp-witted, so ready-handed and so lucky as ourselves. We should have some time, some thought and some feeling to spare for the well-being of our neighbour, to lift him up if he fall, to put him into the way of fending for himself, to lend him a little help when he may lack our aid, and so give him a fair chance of standing upon his own feet, with the means of getting his own livelihood, providing, by honest and independent industry, things honourable in the sight of all men. When it is the established maxim of society, in the church as well as in the world so-called, for every one to do the best he can for himself without heeding what becomes of his neighbour, on the understanding that a man is entitled to get all he can, by the exercise of his superior ability, ingenuity and skill, and been left to take their chance in the race for worldly good, there will be, what we behold at present, some few inordinately rich and countless multitudes miserably poor. Whereas were we, on the other

hand, to think a little not only on our own things but on the things of our poorer brethren, they would soon be beyond the need of our casual charity, by being enabled through timely assistance to make effectual provision for their own support. To prevent poverty is much better than occasionally to relieve it. We bestow a much greater blessing upon society by putting a man into the way of getting his own bread than by now and then giving him a mouldy crust or a cast off garment. Alteration of these points of christian conduct, would learn us the only remaining branch of charity to observe, namely in the third place, the prompt relief of all such as, through some sudden and unlooked for stroke of God, and the mischance of life, are brought into immediate and urgent want. Their number would be comparatively small, whilst the means to relieve them would be ample in proportion; and the disposition to visit the widow and the fatherless, to succour the brother or sister that are in need, would be more lively, more spontaneous and more active, having been matured into the energy of love by the training it had previously received. In this as in every other call upon our bounty we shall feel it more blessed to give than to receive. We should shew ourselves children of our Father who is in heaven, making the sun of our warm philanthropy to shine upon the righteous and the wicked; causing the rain of our fruitful kindness to fall upon the evil and upon the good---our light would shine before men---the fire of our love would warm them---they would see our good works and would glorify the Lord, in whose name and by whose spirit they had been done.

Body and soul do not make up the one man more essentially than the exercise of faith in God working by love to our brother makes up the one religion, which Jesus Christ came to establish in the world. He preached it, he practised it and he has enjoined it upon us. He made his way to the heart wherein he shed abroad his love, and to the mind wherein he promised the light of truth, by doing good to those, whose wretchedness called aloud for help. He was indeed the healer and the helper of men, and such He would still shew himself to be through the benevolent of his followers to the end of time, to the setting up of his kingdom in the earth, renewed and ransomed by His love.

Take this view of the christian religion into your consideration ; and, if you find it true and sound, insist upon it and urge it with all the power you can command. Make it a prominent subject of your addresses to the people ; lay it before them in every shape and in every way most likely to effect and impress them ; that they may be brought to act in accordance with it. It is wonderful how directly the plain words of Holy writ leads to this course of action, and how sweetly this course of action leads the soul again to God. Doing the will of our Father, who is in heaven, we come to know of Christ's doctrine that it is from heaven. Doctrine draws duty after it ; and duty throws fresh and even clearer light upon the doctrine. Controversy and disputation would soon cease, were we in good earnest to set about doing the will of God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. God is love. He, who loves his brother, knows God, and dwells in God, and God in him. Love is the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the law.—Faith works by love, and is dead when love no longer quickens and enlivens it.

You are called in these times to make known this truth. Make it fully, widely known—let all men know it, as far as your influence extends, and God is pleased to crown your labours with His blessing. You are not a sect.—You are not a party. The hour, that sees you one, darkens upon your downfall and rejoices in your destruction. When therefore you meet together, as you are now doing, bear this in mind. Shun every sectarian principle, every sectarian practice. Let the word of God teach you, let the spirit of God lead and guide you. Mingle with your neighbours, talk with them, and teach them by doing them all the good you can, in word and in deed. Bind not where God has not bound, burden not where God has not burthened ; or you and they, whom you have with you, will sink under the weight. The blind who lead, and the blind who follow them, will both fall into the ditch.

Embrace every opportunity of associating with good men of all persuasions, and of co-operating in some common plan for benefitting your fellow-men. There are many preachers, leaders, elders and others of different religious bodies, who mean well, and would do much more good

if they only knew how. Find these men out, converse with them, and if you can arrange it so, prevail upon them to attend your meetings or do you attend theirs, not as proselytes, but as friends and fellow learners under Christ, and fellow-workers together with God. If any such are willing to work amongst you, being at the same time left quite free in other respects, hail their coming, welcome them, and bid them say on. Oh ! how much good might be done on this principle even in the present narrow-minded and big-gotted state of the christian church. It only wants a beginning. In some sort you have made the beginning. Go on, and God will go with you and will bless you.

Have you any plan of house preaching ? It is only by going from house to house, and talking with men by their own fire side, in the homely way they are used to, that you can bring them to understand what they read and what they hear. This was Christ's method. For one sermon in the synagogue he engaged in a hundred familiar, wayside and roof-tree conversations with the people. With the woman by the well, with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, with Martha and Mary and Lazarus in their cottage at Bethany, in the house of Simon, in the corn fields, on the mountain, by the waterside ; thus and in a thousand other such like ways did Christ spread the gospel of the kingdom. Public preaching in great buildings to numerous congregations, is very well in its place. It has its use, and ought not to be neglected. But the other must be attended to. Think about this, talk about it, and act upon it. You have between thirty and forty preachers and but seven preaching places on the plan. Are there no other places in your neighbourhoods, that need the help you could give them---are there no men amongst you willing to go out into the highways, and along the hedges---into the lowly dwellings of their outcast neighbours to carry strange news of life and peace to them ?

I hope shortly to hear from some of you what has been done in the three months last past. When I learn this I shall better able to speak more explicitly. In the meanwhile I have thought it might be well to address you on some important point of christian truth. I have done so, with all deference to the age and wisdom and ex-

perience of many amongst you, compared with whom I am but as a child, with all affection, knowing I was speaking as to my friends and brethren; and with all earnestness, because I felt how urgent was the call upon every one to do what he could to further the good work of God. I am conscious how little I have done, how little I can do, especially in my present situation; but my heart yearns after the fulfilment of the promise that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

Accept my thanks for your continued remembrance of me and mine. The recollection of your kindness and your steady love binds me more closely than ever to you. May God bless and prosper you abundantly.

I know it will give you pleasure to hear that I am in good health and that my family likewise are well. We have been highly favoured even in our sufferings, and I trust are thankful. I will only add that I still remain, your most faithful friend and servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, March 26th, 1840.*

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PASTORAL ADDRESS.

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My dear Sir,—We must look at every thing that happens around us as a lesson given us to learn by the great master of men, in whose hand the things that be are employed as means to teach his children wisdom, and to lead them therewith to build up their happiness. Do not therefore be disheartened because you have seen strife and debate, where you looked for concord and agreement; and have found those hating and tearing one another, whom you looked up to as leaders and shepherds of the flock. I allow that it is a sad, a mournful sight, nor would it be right not to grieve over it. But you have wept enough. Dry up your tears, and ask what you have learned from all this; how much wiser you have grown, and what you mean to do with yourself and your sympathies hereafter? If you have fallen into the one extreme of overtrust in men,

beware, how, having found out your mistake, you fall into the other and not less dangerous extreme of universal doubt and indifference. There is a middle way between them. Seek it, and having found it, walk therein. It is the way of truth and of peace.

You have seen some queer sights lately, and not having had much knowledge of the world before, I do not wonder you should feel stunned, and hardly know where you are. Now you are beginning to waken out of the trance into which you have been thrown by the suddenness and heaviness of the blow. What you have to do first of all is to see that your head is quite clear and steady, that you are wide awake, and have your eyes once more fairly open to look with a true and thoughtful glance on the objects that pass before you. Let your past experience teach you the importance of a personal and independent investigation of truth as well as great caution in placing confidence in others. We are most of us too ready to take up opinions at second hand. The reverence associated with great names, the prejudices of education, the force of present circumstances, together with the natural indolence or timidity of our own minds, lead us to adopt the notions that are prepared to our hand by some master manufacturer of public opinion, or such as happen to be going in the neighbourhood amongst the men with whom we live and from whom we take our general character. Your own observation will enable you to say how very few of those you are most acquainted with have ever, as far as you have the means of knowing, searched out for themselves the truth of the doctrines they profess to believe. It is true that the bulk of men have never been deep thinkers. How should they be? They have never had it in their power to read much or to reflect calmly upon any great number, variety, or extent of the staple materials for reflection. But it is not so much of these, the great body of the people, that I am speaking. I refer rather to the under masters in the school, the ushers, monitors, and class captains of the mighty herd. Are these men thinkers? If they were, would they have been taken in as they have been? Would they now be sitting down, sad, vexed, and broken-hearted as you see them? They would not. You would not be writing to me as you do, telling me how you

have been tricked, juggled, mocked and then forsaken, left to help yourself and shift as you best can, and so with thousands beside yourself.

You want to know what is to be done. I will tell you. You must acknowledge frankly that you have been befooled once, twice, and again, but you must make up your mind not to be made fools of any more. How tiresome you most likely thought my warnings on this very subject. They are even now ringing in your ears. I bid you think and judge for yourselves, and not take anything upon trust, because this or the other great man told you it was so, and almost made you believe it whether you would or not. But the trap was too well baited ; many snapped at the temptingly covered hook and were caught. You must not be surprised at this. These delusions are always successfully practised upon an inexperienced and too credulous people. Let it be your endeavour, instead of consuming any more time in unavailing regret, to keep your poor neighbours as well as yourself from any further snares of the same kind. I think you have come to a wise conclusion in withholding your confidence from those, who at present are bidding so high to obtain it. There is something suspicious about these open-mouthed, glib-tongued, oily-lipped, profession-mongers, and flatterers. The prophets of peace, the apostles of truth, the heralds of sound happiness come in another dress, and speak after a very different fashion. By their fruits ye shall know them. Read that parable and give earnest heed to it.

Is it true that there are those, who are trying to entice you into secret associations ? Be not where they are ; have nothing to do with them. No good in this world ever yet came out of these dangerous institutions, dangerous not less to those who compose them than to those they are intended to destroy. Be men—be Englishmen—be men of God—then what you do will be right, and good will follow it---you will bring your deeds into the light, and the light will shew to all that they are wrought in God and have his blessing.

I am, yours truly,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, February 21st, 1840.*

TO THE CHOIR OF KING STREET CHAPEL,  
STALEYBRIDGE.

The success that has followed your exertions in giving increased efficiency to your small but united and enterprising band, is another proof, added to the number you have been lately called to witness, how much may be done even by a few, when those few are of one heart and soul, and strives together in furtherance of the end they aim at, with all their might until it be attained. You now see what you can do, and will, I dare say, go on with some still greater and better object before you, in the prosecution of which I trust your praiseworthy efforts will be equally successful.

The due share which song and music ought to take in our worship of God both in our houses and in His, seems to be very much lost sight of. But whether we study the essential and unchangeable principles of our common nature, the religious history of all nations, or the application of God's own commands, in this particular to the sacred rites instituted in obedience to those injunctions as described in Holy Scriptures, we shall be convinced how blessed it is to sing as well as to speak our thanks ; to bid stringed instrument and all kinds of music, as well as our tongue talk out the inward and but half utterable feelings of the soul, that struggles to give breath to the manifold burden God's goodness and its own sinfulness have laid upon it. Were we to look to this end of music as a part of divine worship, we should more systematically and more appropriately attend to the injunction of the apostle, and speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts unto the Lord.

It is for want of a due attention to this, amongst other reasons, that we are to attribute the too general inefficiency of Choirs and Orchestras in our places of public worship. What is there played and sung is not suitable to the subject ; the music, whatever its merits in other respects, is not sacred music, and, so far from harmonising with the acts of devotion, of which it forms a part, is jarring and discordant, and disturbs and makes harsh that which it ought to mellow, solemnise and elevate. The

introduction of music, which the choir alone can sing, affords them an opportunity, which they have not been slow to embrace, of ostentatious display, and accordingly we see the great congregation, instead of leading its mighty and many toned voices to lift and swell their songs to heaven, sitting or standing, the listless or dissipated listeners of an orchestral performance; no matter how scientific or brilliant it may be.

Oh! what music we might have in our churches were we but taught to take our proper places, each one where he should be in the multitudinous assembly. Like the sound of many waters, would be our mingled shares in the general song—we should then feel as though with angels and with archangels, we were celebrating together the praises of the God and Father of all. In the fellowship of the Holy, all would be one, heaven and earth would meet and God would be felt within, over and above all, blessed for ever more.

“The church triumphant in his love,  
Their mighty joys we know;  
They sing the Lamb in hymns above,  
And we in hymns below!”

The right kind of music for churches is the old chaunt, and whatever is kindred with it and may be said to spring naturally from it; simple, soft, full—such as all may easily learn and readily join in, because it is the artless expression of the soul, and such as when sung by a host produces an effect, which for sweet sublimity and power is otherwise unattainable.

These few remarks will shew you that, though I do not *understand* music, I have notwithstanding a high conception of the proper dignity connected with your station as a body to whom is entrusted the guidance of a most important part of the public worship of God. If these remarks should lead any of you to a more attentive study of the duties devolving upon you as a choir, I should have occasion to rejoice. Should you succeed, according to the best plan that this enquiry might ultimately suggest, in creating and then fostering a taste for sacred music in your neighbourhood, you would thereby confer a great blessing

upon society, and be a means of soothing the irritated temper and softening the manners of the people. The young, especially, are within your reach. They are naturally fond of music and simple song. Look upon them as a part of your charge, and endeavour to combine what we too often see disjoined---the sound and the sense, the melody of the lip and of the heart.

Instead of being sorry, I am glad that my foes take so much pains to make you think me not your friend---the friend of the poor, and of my countrymen at large. The trouble they give themselves for this purpose shews how much they fear as well as hate me. They know that, if the truths I teach you ever get hold, their craft is gone. So you need not wonder to see them so very busy. Besides this, their talk will lead you to think---and to say what you have seen and known yourselves. You accordingly have mentioned some tokens of my steady love to the hungry, scattered wanderers of your own fold, which I have never spoken about, and only advert to now in answer to your letter, to shew you that my justification is amongst you. It is however quite true, that I am not so far a people's man as to flatter them in any folly that may be uppermost amongst the thousand follies of the day. I stand to the old truths, and will warn them to walk in the good, old way. New fangled things I will have nothing to do with. I never had, as you well know; but on the other hand, have always bid you beware of them and shun them.

I thank you heartily, for the kind remittance of money you have sent me. You need think no more and say no more about the smallness of the amount. It is an offering of your friendship, and as such I take it---and am thankful for so many tokens of the poor man's love. They tell me I have not ceased to live in the hearts of those amongst whom I have lived the longest, and as marks of their attachment and confidence, they stimulate me to do all I can to become more worthy of their affection day by day. Live well, my friends, agree together, and be happy in God's love and each others--to hear of which will always increase the happiness of your old friend,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, February 21st, 1840.*

ON POLITICAL UNIONS.

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I do not wonder at what you tell me about the dwindling away of the Hyde "Radical Association." It could not well be otherwise. Clubs of this kind always fall off after the stir is over, which brought them into being. Political Societies are the offspring of political excitement amongst a people, who, individually weak, hope by the union of numbers to become collectively powerful, and by the organization of their scattered forces to intimidate and overawe their opponents, who are more than a match for them, as they stand together in the established relations of general society. In themselves they are an evil, and always indicate to the eye of the philosophical observer the existence of inward and deep seated disease in the social constitution, in which they make their appearance. It is not often they lead to any real and lasting good--never, unless in the hands of men, whose wisdom knows how to apply and direct the power they possess, and whose love of country is so much stronger than the love of self, as to induce them to resign the authority, with which they were only invested for a special purpose and for a brief period, the moment the end is answered, for which it was delegated to them. When unhappily, as is too often the case, the leaders of the people are either weak men, and not masters in the work given them to do, or bad men, looking more to themselves than their country, or men mistaken in their ideas of what ought to be done when the crisis comes upon them, then it is you behold, instead of a change for the better as you had been led to look for, a change every way for the worse--the establishment of a despotism in some other shape, if the people are made to pass through the wild horrors of a bloody revolution, or an increase of the despotism already existing, where the people are thwarted in their attempts to cast off the yoke of their oppressors in consequence of the ill-concerted measures, the mutual jealousies or the imbecility of those, who have undertaken to lead them. It is in this way the people become the victims of their own delusions, or of the designs of those, whom they have trusted. Then comes the ebb of the tide that so lately flowed with swelling, threatening waves.

It has risen to its height, and begins to go down again. The waters settle, and all is dull and heavy as before, if not even worse than when the waters were first raised by the storm of political fury. These clubs have their use. They bring the evils of society to a head. The scattered and far spread complaints of the people are brought to a point, and when thus concentrated will be heard. When the other classes of the community know what this means, and have the wisdom to meet the burdened and suffering people half way, and by timely conciliation and concession assuage their upwrought feelings---all may be well once more. But where either party is hard and stubborn, unwilling to hear reason, or made up against doing right, then there is nothing left but an appeal to the sword, which is almost always in favour of the wealthier orders, and where it is not, if, as I said before, the leaders of the people are not true Patriots, the power of the people, organised in clubs, is turned against themselves, and their last state is worse than their former one. From all I can see or hear, there is no good end to be reached by any associations of this kind at present. There is no definite, tangible, substantial good set before you by any of your so called "Leaders"--nor amongst them can I find one, whose past conduct has been such as to give you confidence in his future projects. Of course you are the best judges in your own affairs. But I should advise you to have nothing to do with any man who can do nothing for you or with you, but filch all you have from you, and then by his blundering or treachery bring you into trouble and leave you in the lurch. I am disgusted with the juggling which I find is going on amongst you. You are kept in a state of constant excitement, first on one pretence and then on another, but you are never shewn how, never helped to seek after and attain any real good for yourselves. Whoever has anything to do with new "Conventions," new "Rent," new "Co-operation stores," or new humbug of the same kind, be it what it may, attempted to be palmed upon you by the same men, will only burn his own fingers, whilst the fox eats up the chesnut, that he has been fool enough to pull out of the fire.

The date at the beginning of this letter will shew you

when I began to write, I was very poorly at the time and not at all in the humour for letter writing, I finish it to day, December 26, and hope you will excuse my not answering your kind letter sooner. I know nothing about the Magazine, except that I have done all that was requested of me about it. If it do not come out at the time appointed, I am not to blame. How are you all. I hope you have had a merry Christmas and will have a happy new year.

We have all been poorly, but are better. Give my best love to—— and all the family—as above to all my friends in Hyde, to whom you will read this letter. We have had a very wet dull season, and no appearance of any good old fashioned winters.

I am, yours very faithfully,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, Dec. 20th, 1839.*

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## ON THE PLEA OF GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

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My dear Sir,—I should say to you in this business, bear and forbear. Leave every one to think, judge and act for himself. My own views on the subject are very strong, but I would not condemn another because he came to a different conclusion. It is of the very essence of true Christian love, that the widest possible latitude should be given in all matters of opinion and conscience. Where this is not so, there is an end at once to all freedom, and oneness amongst brethren becomes impossible. It seems that your friend Durham saw fit to plead guilty to the charge brought against him at the late Liverpool Assises. Whether in this he did right or wrong, must be left to himself to determine. The knowledge I have of the man, would lead me to believe he acted according to the best light he had at the time, and under the circumstances in which he was placed. I think the step he and some others took was illadvised, both as respects themselves and the cause they profess to advocate. Whatever they may say in defence or in exculpation of their conduct, they will be looked upon as men, who in the hour of trial, through weakness and fear, gave way before the foe, that conquered them as effectually by the

promise of clemency, as by the threat of ulterior punishment. I think, besides, that no one ought to acknowledge himself guilty, unless he feels and knows that he is so. But this is not the light, in which a case of this kind is commonly regarded. Society, by usage and custom no longer looks upon the "plea" of guilty or "not guilty," as indication of the natural consciousness, in the individual, who makes it, of his criminality in the one instance or of his innocence in the other. He is allowed, no matter how true the charge, to affirm his innocence; putting upon his accuser the task of proving by undeniable evidence his commission of the alleged offence. And on the other hand especially where there may happen to be, real or supposed, legal guilt, without any, or with but very slight moral culpability, he is permitted to go through the forms of law, acknowledging the technical justice of the charge, on the understanding that he shall be set at liberty as having in fact done nothing worthy of the punishment attached to the offence originally charged against him. There is always here, more or less, an impression that he did not deserve to suffer—in other words, that he was in reason and strict justice nearly if not altogether innocent.

Now whilst I would not myself take the benefit of such a view of the question as this, considering it, in political trials especially, a most unworthy compromise on both sides. I would nevertheless yield to another as much advantage from it as he could conscientiously take. All men do not see these things with the same eyes. All men have not the same strength of mind—or where two are equally strong, one may not be equally convinced with the other of the duty and the necessity of using it.

It was easy to foresee what broils would arise from the different conduct pursued by different men at the late assizes. I advised all who had taken a leading part in the agitation to stand their trial fairly and boldly, so that, if convicted, having done what was wrong, they might suffer for that wrong—and if convicted, having said and done nothing worthy of bonds, their patience and fortitude under their unrighteous sentence, might shew them worthy of the cause, for which they were called to suffer, worthy of the affection and confidence of the people who had

looked up to them as leaders, and worthy hereafter still to occupy an honourable position amongst those who, however sometimes mistaken in the course they had adopted, seek in sincerity and truth the well-being and happiness of their fellow-men.

Should you then think, as I most certainly do, that some of your friends have in this instance taken a false step, let me beseech of you not to speak harshly of them, or not unkindly towards them. If in your judgment they have erred through it—however, evil counsel or timidity tell them so with all the affection and fidelity, which brethren should shew to one another—and having done this, then forget and forgive. Once more, give each other the right hand of fellowship, and go on in peace and concord, striving to do all the good to each other and to all men, that it lies in your power to do. This is all I have to say on the subject. I admire your zeal, but at the same time, let wisdom guide and love inspire it. Remember me very kindly to Durham. I have always had a high esteem for him, and I love him still. Beware of every thing that would lead to disunion and division. Keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.

Believe me, yours truly,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, Dec. 9th, 1839.*

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TO THE SOCIETY AND CONGREGATION WORSHIPPING IN CHARLESTOWN, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE.

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The roof under which you are now sitting in peace is in itself a sermon. It will remind you of the summer suns and the winter snows you and I have outstood together, when we had no other shelter than what the bare heaven afforded us. In cold and heat, by day and night, the way-side or the hill was our only temple. And why was it thus? Because we would not yield to the powers of the world around us; because we withstood the evil we saw done to the poor and needy; because we bore witness

against it, and lifted up our voice on behalf of those who had neither helper nor friend. We set out upon a great principle: we took the Word of God as we found it, and built our trust upon it. Has it given way from under us? Have we, in any thing or in any wise, seen it fail? You are worshipping God this day, as under your own vine and fig-tree, none making you afraid, and can look back upon all the way wherein you have been led. Say, then, whether, in and through all, God has not been with you and blessed you. Hitherto, by His help, you are come. You have not forgotten when, amid the jeers and scorn of those who looked down upon me and hated you, I laid the first stone of this lowly but yet goodly building. I told you at that time through what difficulties you would have to work your way; but that, if you would steadily and boldly hold on, walking by the same rule and minding the same things, God would be your keeper and your guide, strengthening you under every trial, covering your head in the day of battle, and at last crowning you with victory as the reward of your holy strife. Has it not been so? The storm has blown over—the wind is hushed—you enjoy a still and pious calm. Lift up your eyes and see what has been wrought in your midst since that day! Is it not the Lord's doing; is it not wondrous in your sight?

You meet to day to call these things to mind, to talk them over one to another, and think of them each within himself. Need I tell you what they teach? Let God speak to you by the mouth of those whom you have come to hear, and let your own hearts give answer as the voice within shall prompt. It is true, I am no longer with you; my weak voice is now unheard. But what then? Other and, I trust, worthier men stand before you in my stead. They plead mightily with you as the messengers of the Most High, sent to offer life, and health, and peace to all the children of the Father, the Helper, and the Friend of all. His Word is Truth. The truth shall make you free. Those whom that truth sets free, are free indeed. Brethren, open wide the blessed book—read what you find written there. Pray that your eyes may be enlightened to see, your understanding strengthened to lay hold of, and your heart opened to welcome the word of everlasting life. In

all things belonging to this life and the life that is to come, this book is your safest, best, and only guide: make it then your study, the foundation of your faith, and the rule of your life and conduct. Do this and you will never fall.

It has given me no small joy, during the eight months I have spent at a distance from you, to hear of the steadfastness, the patience, and the zeal you have shewn in the trials you have had to undergo for the truth's sake. Be assured that I reckon the burden I have had to bear to be light indeed, when I think of the much heavier load many of you still stagger under, and of the righteous cause which I have had the honour to advocate, and, perhaps, in some slight measure, to advance. Brethren, you who are free and have the power, come up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty. There is much sin and wickedness, much evil, suffering, and wretchedness around you. Tell to every man, as he may stand in need of it, what God would have him to do; and, as far as in you lies, help every man according to his wants. This is the will of God concerning you and all with whom you have to do. May he bless you in your endeavour to do good,

The building wherein you now worship God has many and strong claims upon you. It has been hallowed to the holiest and the best of uses—God's glory in the highest, on earth, peace amongst men of good will—these are the ends to the promotion of which it was reared, and still stands. Advance these ends to day, as far as God has given you the means to do so. Sacred to such objects, the building is your own. It belongs to you and to your children. It has been made a blessing to thousands—let it be your prayer that God would make it a blessing to thousands more. In this prayer most earnestly joins your faithful friend and servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle," Chester, April 10, 1840.*

## OF THE ORIGINAL OF THE LAW.

Almighty God shewed more love to man than to any other creature ; when he made him after his own image, and gave him understanding ; considering that he stood continually ready to fall into sin by three manner of adversaries, and therefore he gave the law to force and drive sinners to salvation by earthly punishments ; that for the pure love of God men would abstain from sin, and therefore made Moses their teacher.

The law by ordinances of our holy predecessors is divided into two volumes : into the canon law, which consisteth in the amendment of spiritual offences ; first, by admonition, prayers, reproofs, excommunication ; secondly, into the written law, which consisteth in the punishing of temporal offences, by summons, attachments, and punishments or penalties.

Of the spiritual law, the prelates judged ; and lay princes of the other law : the law whereof this sum is made, is the written law of the ancient usages warranted by the Holy Scripture. And because it is given to all in general, it is called the Common Law. And because there was no other law but that, were general councils and parliaments in use, and that diversly in several places, according to the qualities of the people of divers countries and boroughs ; they were, according to ancient privileges, changed for the ease of the people of those places.

All our usages and laws are also laid for the keeping and exaltation of the peace of God ; and, therefore, it is to be known, that the people are not to be adjudged by similitudes and examples not canonized, but by the love of peace, of chastity, of temperance, of charity, of mercy, and of good works.

After that God brought down low the nobility of the Britons, who used more force than right, he delivered the realm to the most humble and simple of all the countries adjoining, that is to say, to the Saxons, who from the parts of Almaine became conquerors, of which nation there were forty sovereigns who were companions. These princes called this land England, which before was called Great Britain, or Britannia Major. These princes, after

great wars, tribulations, and troubles, suffered for a long time, chose themselves one king to reign over them, to govern God's people, and to maintain and defend their persons and their goods in peace by rules of law. And at the beginning they made the king to swear, that he should maintain the christian faith with all his power, and govern his people by law, without having regard to the person of any one; and that he should be obedient to suffer right as well as his other people should be.

And afterwards this realm was divided in inheritances according to the number of those companions who then remained in the realm, into parts, by shires, and every one had a shire delivered unto him to keep and defend against the enemies, according to every one's estate, that is to say,

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Barkshire,       | Hertfordshire,   |
| Bedfordshire,    | Huntingdonshire, |
| Buckinghamshire, | Kent,            |
| Cornwall,        | Lancashire,      |
| Chestershire,    | Leicestershire,  |
| Cumberland,      | Lincolnshire,    |
| Dorset,          | London,          |
| Devonshire,      | Middlesex,       |
| Derbyshire,      | Surrey,          |
| Essex            | Shropshire,      |
| Everwickshire,   | Somersetshire,   |
| Yorkshire,       | Southampton,     |
| Norfolk,         | Staffordshire,   |
| Northamptonshire | Oxfordshire,     |
| Northumberland,  | Rutlandshire,    |
| Nottinghamshire, | Suffolk,         |
| Gloucestershire, | Westmoreland,    |
| Cambridgeshire,  | Wiltshire,       |
| Herefordshire,   | Worcestershire.  |

And although that the king ought not to have any peer in the land, nevertheless because that the king of his own wrong if he offend against any of his people, nor none of his commissaries can be judge and party; it was behoveful by the law that he should have companions, to hear and determine of all writs, and plaints, of all wrongs, as well of the king as of the queen, and her children; and of those especially where one could not have otherwise

common right: these companions are now called counts, earls, according to the Latin *comites*; and so at this day are those shires called counties, in Latin *comitatus*; and that which is without these counties, belongeth to the English by conquest.

After that time, these companions, after the division of the realm into shires, divided their people, which they found scattering about, into centuries, and to every century they appointed a centiner, and according to the number of the centuries spake every shire; and to every centiner they assigned his part by metes and bounds, to keep and defend the same with his century, so that they were ready to run to their arms at all times when the enemies came, or other needful occasion was. And these divisions in some places are called hundreds, according to the number of the first people; and in some places *tithings*, or *wapentakes*, according to the English; (which is French taking of arms): these divisions they made whereby the peace, which consisted in charity and true love, was kept and maintained.

For the estate of the realm, king Alfred caused the earls to meet, and ordained for a perpetual usage, that twice a year, or oftener, if need were, in time of peace they should assemble together at London, to speak their minds for the guiding of the people of God, how they should keep themselves from offences, should live in quiet, and should have right done to them by certain usages, and sound judgments.

By this estate many ordinances were made by many kings, until the time of king Edward I.; the which ordinances were abused, or not used by many, nor very current, because they were not put into writing, and certainly published.

One of the ordinances was, that every one should love his Creator with all his soul, and according to the points of the christian faith; and wrong, force, and every offence was forbidden.

And it was assented unto, that these things following should belong to kings, and to the right of crown. Sovereign jurisdiction.

The sovereign jurisdiction throughout the whole land

unto the midst of the sea encompassing the whole realm, as franchises, treasure found in the land, waif, estray; goods of felons and fugitives which should remain out of any one's rights, counties, honours, hundreds, wards, goals, forests, chief cities; the chief ports of the sea, great manors; these rights the first kings held, and of the residue of the land they did enfeoff the earls, barons, knights, serjeants and others, to hold of the kings by the services provided, and ordained for the defence of the realm, according to the articles of the ancient kings.

Also, coroners were ordained in every county, and sheriffs to defend the county, when the counties were dismissed of their guards, and bailiffs in the places of centiners. And the sheriffs and bailiffs caused the free tenants of their bailiwicks to meet at the counties and hundreds; at which justice was so done, that every one so judged his neighbour by such judgment as a man could not elsewhere receive in the like cases, until such time as the customs of the realm were put in writing, and certainly established.

And although a freeman commonly was not to serve without his assent, nevertheless it was assented unto, that free tenants should meet together in the counties, hundreds, and the lords' courts, if they were especially exempted to do such suits, and there judged their neighbours.

And that right should be done from fifteen days to fifteen days before the king and his judges, and from month to month in the counties, if the largeness of the counties requireth not a longer time; and that every three weeks right should be administered in other courts; and that every free tenant was bound to do such suit; and every free tenant had ordinary jurisdiction: and that from day to day the right should be hastened of strangers, as in courts of Pipowder according to the law-merchant.

The turns of sheriffs and views of free pledges were ordained; and it was ordained that none of the age of fourteen years or above was to remain in the realm above forty days, if they were not first sworn to the king by an oath of fealty, and received into a decennery.

# STEPHENS' MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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JUNE, 1840.

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## TO THE READERS OF THE STEPHENS' MAGAZINE.

IN consequence of the restrictions of those minions of the ministry of the day, the county magistrates, upon the liberties of the Rev. J. R. Stephens, he has not been able to write for the magazine in that manner which he could have wished, and the consequences have been the great irregularity of the time of appearance of the magazine, as well as the absence of matter of interest, concerning the important events which are now rapidly revolutionising once happy England.

The Ashton committee have, with the approbation of Mr. Stephens, decided upon an alteration in the matter of the magazine, and we have therefore to announce, that articles from the pens of men in various townships in Lancashire will appear, in the future numbers, all of course bearing upon the one great point, namely, the welfare of the people. Our object will be to give a sketch of the principal events of the month, with such comments upon them as they shall seem to deserve; we therefore solicit communications from all parties on matters connected with the public welfare. Our study will be, to make the magazine a vehicle for conveying to the oppressed such information as shall enable them, in a constitutional manner, to rid themselves of their wrongs; and also for conveying to the oppressor the knowledge that his oppressions shall not

endure for ever. Our task shall be, to lay before our readers a clear view of those institutions which, if properly worked, will ensure us that security of liberty and property so much desired, and to point out the faults of our present unnatural system, as they present themselves to our view.

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## PRESENT STATE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE PEOPLE.

*The "Castle," Chester, May 21, 1840.*

My dear Sir,—The best answer I can give to your question about the present state and future prospects of the people, will be a simple reference to the results of your own observation during the eighteen months. All you have to do, is to call to mind the events that have passed in succession before you ; to think them well over, and to reason coolly and impartially from the facts, with which you have yourself been conversant. Truly, melancholy in many respects as the consequences of the recent agitation have been, they will not be without their use, if they force upon the attention of men like yourself those serious considerations, which it would have been well for you, and thousands besides you, to have regarded long ago. In public, no less than in private matters, it will be found, that most of the mischances and misfortunes that befall us are occasioned by a neglect of mature and deliberate reflection. We are too prone to give ourselves up to the impulse of the moment, and to plunge heedlessly and recklessly into dangers that might have been shunned, had they only been thought of and guarded against in time. You will recollect that, apart from the abstract merits of the question, I strongly objected to the measures proposed by your so called "leaders," on the ground that the people were hurried into the adoption of them, suddenly and all at once, no sufficient opportunity having been afforded them for a dispassionate discussion of the grave and momentous interests they involved. The validity of this objection, which in the heat of excited feeling no one would listen to, is now proved by the fact that, after some two or three hundred advocates of the "charter" have

been imprisoned and transported, and the whole of the agitation has been acknowledged to be a failure, every body is calling out for some new scheme for the organization of the people, and for the direction of their energies to fresh objects of pursuit. Why all this, unless there was something radically and essentially wrong in the course originally recommended to them, and followed with such blind and breathless haste? Mind, I am not accusing those, under whose guidance you acted, with having wilfully misled you; but it is clear as noon-day, that neither they nor you had well considered what you were about, or you would have been better prepared for what has since taken place, and would not have to call one upon another to know what project is to be undertaken next.

Now, shall all that has happened be thrown away upon you? Will you learn wisdom from what you have suffered, or will you be smitten yet again? That is the question you have to answer now; and, that you may not fall again into the snare, in which you have already been caught, I have taken the liberty to direct your attention to the past. It makes one heartsick to see the endless and bootless errands you are sent upon, first by one and then by another of your masters, whose newfangled notions are no sooner set before you than they are abandoned as unsuitable, and are as quickly followed by others no better than those that went before. The will-o'-the-wisp, flitting from bog to bog, shining only to mislead, and hovering over the quagmire only to engulf the silly fools that follow it, is much too faint and poor an emblem wherewith to describe the dangerous and fatal courses the people have run, and, if they give not great heed to themselves, will once more run again. I cannot tell you how sad I feel when I think of this; and yet I am not without hope. That hope is founded in God, who will not forsake the poor, even though they shall go astray, and in the people themselves, who, unless I am very much mistaken, are beginning to think, and to ask how it is they have so many times fancied themselves within reach of the object of their pursuit, and have found themselves so many times most miserably mistaken.

Believe me, my dear sir, it is no light, no easy matter, to attempt to change the institutions of any country, of such a country as England in particular. He, who proposes a change ought to know what he is about. He should have

a more than skin-deep knowledge of human nature in the abstract, for man is a more wonderful being than the would-be-wise ones take him to be. He should understand the actual and relative condition of each class and order of society, and have respect to their mutual prejudices and passions, as well as to the real or supposed injuries, which the one is said to be suffering from the other. There is a spirit, be it good or bad, that breathes in the social body, that makes up its life as a whole, that moulds its shape, that influences its movements, and gives directions to its hidden powers. The complicated machinery of society obeys the spirit, as the body of individual man obeys the mind within him. Acts of Parliament or recorded Laws, in the first instance, can do nothing to renovate, reform, or improve a nation. Taking the governing power from one class and giving it to another can do nothing. It is not the transfer or the extension of the power to make laws that we mainly want—but the *will*, only, to make—only to obey such laws as are right, and good, and true, as for others, so for ourselves also. This is the first and the great want. You shall tell me whether this want is not perceptible almost, if not quite, as much amongst the poor as amongst the rich. You know I am not rich men's apologist—but neither will I shrink from saying, that before the power to make the law would do any, the smallest, good to the poor, as a class, there must be wrought upon them a great, a mighty change. In fact as society is morally, I will not say legally, constituted, it would be morally impossible for the people at large to govern themselves for their own good. I have always told you this, and the more I reflect upon it, the more strongly am I convinced of the correctness of my opinions ; and had I thought differently before, what I have seen the last two years would be sufficient to satisfy me of the fact. The slavish spirit must be driven out of the man, before he can act as a freeman *should* ; and, on the other hand, the spirit of oppression must give way, before those, who now are at enmity, can become reconciled to each other, and dwell together as brethren in peace. I have often wished to see these great questions fairly argued before the people, by those who profess to feel for them and to befriend them. Would they not listen, think you ? I think they would. I think that if those who really love the people, would set aside for a while all con-

siderations of popularity, and dismiss all fear of being called a hard name or two, much might be done towards finding out the real root of the evils existing in society, and the best and most efficacious remedy for those evils. Of one thing I am certain, that unless something of this kind be done, you may bid farewell to any hope of practical and permanent relief. I have been much grieved to find some of those, whom I considered best qualified for this task hang back and keep aloof from the people in this the time of their greatest need. They may have consulted their own reputation, or their own safety, by thus withholding their counsel in the hour of confusion and danger; or they may have thought the moment had not arrived when dictates of sound and sober reason would be attended to. But surely the moment has now come—or when will it come? Let them, then, step forward and argue with you, and you with them, and with one another. I am sure good will come of it. I never yet attended a meeting of the people, or associated with smaller companies of them in private, without opening out my views, to a greater or lesser extent, before them; and I never found them indisposed to listen with attention, and to argue with moderation and fairness. The result of my acquaintance with the people generally has led me to the belief, that what they really want, is, a living after earning it; a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. That, as far as I have understood them, is the thing they are in search of, and with which they would be happy and content. They are not madly bent upon realising any visionary and impracticable theory. They may have temporally adopted many such as a supposed means to this end, but so soon as their inadequacy to accomplish that end is discovered, they are immediately and at once abandoned, and something else that seems more likely to bring it about, is instantly resorted to. Is it not so—is not this the feeling that prevails amongst your workmates and neighbours? Let me know if I am mistaken. If I am not mistaken, then, I think, with this feeling as the ground upon which to build, and this object as the end sought, some sound principles might be laid down, and some practicable and definite plan of action might be proposed.

You express a hope that, in the midst of the many strange and unlooked for changes that have taken place in

the opinions and practice of some, from whom you expected better things, I continue to be the same man you have always found me to be. My answer to this is, when you want me, try me; and when I have done my best, weigh all in the scales of sincerity and consistency. I have time enough where I am for turning things over and over, and looking at them on this side and on that. But as yet I have had nothing to change, when I see need to change, I will let you know. Believe me, you will never be relieved from London. All good, all blessing must begin in each man's heart, in each one's house, in the hamlet and neighbourhood where he dwells. There must the seed of true and lasting good be sown; there must it take root; thence must it spread, until it girdle in and encompass the whole family of man. I hope in some measure you have found this to be the case in your own experience. If you have, make it known to all around you, for by so doing you will increase your own happiness and confer incalculable benefit upon your fellow-creatures. Give my love to all the members of your family. I hope they are well, and that you are doing as well in these bad times as can be expected. Write to me as often and as freely as you please. I shall always be glad to hear from you, and will answer all questions you put to me, in good faith and to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Believe me to remain,  
Your faithful friend and servant,  
J. R. STEPHENS.

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## OUR ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS & THE PRESENT SUFFERINGS OF THE WORKING CLASSES,

My Friends,—Attend to me a little while and if I fail to benefit ye, lay not the blame to me, for so sure as the day passeth and the night cometh, so surely is what I now lay before you the truth. God's truth, that which if understood is better than silver or gold, for upon a thorough understanding and a practical use of these truths depend your well-being and true happiness.

Much has been spoken, and much has been written on the sufferings of the working classes. Masters have been denounced as tyrants, Governments have been denounced

as robbers of the poor, and oppressors of the weak. Many have there been to tell you of the evils you are labouring under, painting in glowing colours your sufferings, and widening the already too wide distinctions between the various classes of society. But no one has yet risen to point to the very plain, the very intelligible methods whereby our fathers lived in peace and security, in the full enjoyment of happiness, and of the fruits of their industry, knowing nothing of the exciseman, nothing of national debt, nothing of Commissioners of Stamps, nothing of Surveyors of Taxes, nothing of any but direct taxes, in short, living without deeming it possible that a degenerate progeny would be called into existence whose ignorance would be so great, that after having suffered all the stout bulwarks which defended the earnings of honest industry, to become one mass of mouldered wreck and ruin—the pert, vain, wretched creatures, whilst lingering out a despicable existence, perchance inside a prison wall, where some infraction of the infamous laws for despoiling the honest labourer of his property, has thrown them ; or, whilst seeing the fruits of their labour taken to keep armies of idlers, talk about the vast improvements of the age, the gigantic march of intellect, the wonderful ignorance of those barbarians, our ancestors, and then wisely conclude with saying, Ah, poor creatures ! could they only rise from their church-yard graves, and see the wonderful discoveries in nature and art made since their days, they would scarcely believe the evidence of their own eyes. This is the cant of this age, when most men seem bent upon reversing those very expressive lines—

“ Man wants but little here below,

Nor wants that little long.”

Acting as if the golden rule had lost its virtue, and that instead of doing unto others as they would be done unto they must take all they can wrap and wring, thinking for no one but themselves, trampling upon the weak, and ill-treating the poor. Can there be anything more hateful to a right minded man, than those hot-beds of delusion and cant, of hypocrisy and baseness, which all those institutions for *educating* the youth of the nation really are, where base servility of the conductors exclude everything connected with politics ? Need we wonder at the midnight darkness

that pervades the minds of the present race, when the science of securing our lives, our liberties, and our property, is of all other things the only one deemed by the teachers of the day unworthy of notice ?

As I know how important it really is to you, my friends, that you should have a full knowledge of the thoroughly effectual means with which the liberty and property of our fathers was defended against the encroachments of the idlers of their times, for idle and ungodly men will exist in all times, and the true end of politics is to keep them under, not to foster them, not to honour and reward them as industrious and virtuous, but to discountenance the idle and wicked, and to put them down, even though they are clad in purple and fine linen. Knowing how important this kind of knowledge is—for what boots your being able to produce much if you have not the knowledge to keep it for your just and proper use—I will give you an outline of the means whereby those *ignorant barbarian* fathers of ours did preserve their earnings. You may then compare their plain way of dealing to ours, and then judge ye whether we have not to blame ourselves for having neglected and suffered to fall to ruin those admirable institutions, which were so effective in the hands of our fathers.

The ruling principle has always been, in the institutions of this country, the safety of those classes for whom the institutions have been created.

Our Government is composed of King, Lords, and Commons, and under those three titles exist the whole of the people of England.

Every society of people must of necessity have a head, a middle, and a tail, to prevent squabbling amongst those nearest the head or king. We have established hereditary right to the crown, which means, that so long as the Lords and the Commons choose, they will allow the heir of the possessor of the throne to succeed to the throne, when vacant either by death or crime of the former king; as in the case of Edward the Second, who was dethroned for crimes against the welfare of the people, and who was succeeded by his son, Edward the Third, during the lifetime of his father.

But variations have been made from this practice of hereditary right, when the welfare of the nation has demanded it, as in the case of the Stuart family, 1st in Charles the First's case, who assuming that the nation

had nothing to do but obey his will, lost his throne and his head ; and again, in the case of his son, James the Second, whose devoted attachment to papacy was such as actually to cause his own printer to print and sell books in defence of the Catholic religion, and to put forth a Catholic almanac, containing explanations of the mysteries of the Catholic faith, thus incurring that intense dislike of the Protestants, which lost him his throne.

Thus the common welfare is the supreme law, to which all other laws must yield.

The king has powers and privileges wherewithal to guard his estate, these are to be held inviolate so long as the powers and privileges of the Lords and Commons are held inviolate by him. The Lords, or Aristocracy of the nation, have rights which are to be respected whilst they do their duty towards the people ; and the people of England have rights which ought to be held as inviolate and as sacred as the rights of the Crown or Aristocracy. But, alas ! the rights of the people are now only scoffed at, and they are bidden to work, that the fruits of their labours may be taken by some of the many hordes of tax collectors who swarm over the face of the country, as so many jackall's, for the idle and profligate.

Now, in order that you may not be led away by loose indefinite talk, let us calmly inquire what are these rights of which so much talk is uttered, and what were those institutions for the due preservation of these rights, concerning which so many speeches are made, and yet so little explained to the minds of the people.

1st, As to the rights of freemen. We have a *right* to enjoy the fruits of our own labour, without any being taken away by force, contrary to our will ; for the true end of Government is, that we may labour in security and peace, and reap the fruits thereof in comfort. For if our property be taken from us by force, as well may we have no Government, as have one which preys upon us even as an enemy, despoiling us of our liberty and property. The fruits of our labour consist of 1st, food ; 2nd, clothing ; 3d, housing. All these we have a full right to enjoy without the interference of any one, and as the majority of the people will, a small portion may be taken for the necessary exigencies of preserving the peace and order of the community. But on no occasion shall so much of the fruits of labour be

taken for the business of Government, as shall oppress heavily any one portion of society, whilst the others are not troubled.

These are the rights of labour, and now comes for our consideration the right of *liberty*. Without liberty to come and go in the land of his birth, no man can enjoy the fruits of his labour. Without the liberty of speech, no man can defend or assert those truths which are necessary to his salvation. Without, in short, that just and necessary liberty to use our senses and powers of body and mind, we are not in a condition to preserve our property from the hands of the spoiler ; thus, we see, if we are to enjoy the fruits of the earth, we must have liberty. Hence, liberty and property ought to be well watched and cherished : if one goes, the other soon follows.

And now for the institutions which, in the DARK ages, our IGNORANT ancestors created, to preserve their liberties and property.

The ever present principle with them was, to keep all the power possible in their own hands and to make all laws and taxes spring from their own will ; and in order to guard against the possibility of bad laws, and unjust taxes, being forced upon them, they so hedged and fenced in their liberties and property, that to get at either, contrary to their pleasure, was nearly impossible.

The kingdom being divided into shires, each shire had its own government, freely chosen by the people of the county, annually in public meeting, by show of hands ; for they dreamed not of polling man by man, nor of the contemptible ballot, but openly and manfully the shirereeve was chosen, whose business it was to watch over the well being of the whole county.

The shire being again divided into hundreds, the government of which hundreds was placed by the people, at public meeting in their Courts Leet, in the person of a high constable, who presided over the Leets for the ensuing year, whose care it was to watch over the well being of the hundred.

At the Courts Leet of every hundred, after the appointment of high constable, came the election, by show of hands, for the various townships of the hundred ; the duties of the constable of the township wasto keep the peace, and watch over the welfare of the township.

And now let us look at the beauty and perfection of this admirable mode of preserving our liberty and property.

No tax could be laid without having to be collected through the sheriff, the high constable, or constable of the hundred, and constable of the township. The writ issued by and with the authority of parliament, for leveying any tax, was directed to the sheriff of the county, with the amount stated as the quota of the tax for that especial county ; the sheriff then directed the high constable of each of the hundreds in his county, to raise the quota belonging to his hundred, which was, of course, the fair amount for a hundred to raise. The business of the constable of the hundred was then to send to the constables of the townships, to collect in each township, the quota for each.

Thus, we see, that our fathers had effectual means for prevention of all unjust taxes, for if the officers of the townships, hundred and counties, did their duty, no wrong tax could be collected, as the officers would not collect wrong taxes angaint the will of the people ; and if they presisted in collecting them, at the next annual election, men would be elected who would be pledged not to obey the writ, and thus defeat the obtaining any unjust tax. No man can have the fact too firmly imprinted upon his mind, that the parliament of this kingdom is going beyond its province, when it makes separate laws for each township, the fact is, with our local governments, parliament has, of right, nothing to do, and when the men from one part of the kingdom dictate laws for those of the others to obey, those who have no alternative but to obey, are in the situation of an enslaved people. Therefore it is, if we are to preserve liberty and property, we must cling to the death to the free exercise of the power to make laws ourselves for our own government, in the townships, hundreds and counties wherein we dwell.

The hated and hellish New Poor Law, the highly unconstitutional New Police, the Excise Laws, the Railway and Canal Laws, in short, all the horrid miseries which we are now enduring, are to be attributed to that monstrous and horrible " March of Intellect " which, despising the experience of past ages, has reared its impudent head, to talk about the dark ages of our ignorant ancestors, whilst the owners of this greatness of intellect, have gradually sunk deeper and deeper into the slough of slavery and degrada-

tion. They have seen their sheriffs become nominees of the Ministry of the day ; they have seen the office of magistrate also wrested from them, and placed at the disposal of the Ministry. They have, for now nearly eight hundred years, borne the Norman yoke upon the free Saxon institutions, and what have they done to free themselves ? Alas, alas, worse than nothing ! on the contrary, they have hugged and kissed their chains. Why comes it we have the nominee of the Crown sitting at the head of the meetings of the people of the Salford Hundred, instead of the constitutional officer, the high constable of the hundred ? Simply because we have marched so far in our intellectual attainments, as to forget everything concerning free Government. Surely those spectral forms of our old free institutions which continue to stalk about amongst us, and which many see without knowing what they mean and hear of without inquiring what they are, ought to awaken us to a thorough acquaintance with the sad reality that we are, in deed, and in truth, a conquered nation, that the manorial lords still grind us to the dust, still command us to perform suit and service, still summon the attendance of the frankpledges to do their bidding, still place their own stewards, as they call them, over our free Court Leet ; still pack juries of certain descriptions, who will be the most likely to name their own boroughreeves and constables.

Englishmen, think of these things, look and examine for yourselves ; be not led away by ignorant, noisy demagogues, whose main intent is to live upon ye. But rouse from your slumbers and proclaim, in a voice of thunder, your resolution to be free, to enjoy your own earnings, and act in accordance with such a resolution.

W.

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BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON.—PSALM CXXXVII.

By J. R. STEPHENS.

I.

By thy proud waters, Babylon,  
 Poor captive outcasts we sat down ;  
 Our harps upon the willows hung,  
 Unheed now, untuned, unstrung :  
 Sweet solace of our happier day's,  
 When touched to sound Jehovah's praise ;  
 Now that our hours of song are o'er,  
 We strike your tuneful strings no more !

## II.

Far from our native country torn,  
The gentile's slave, the gentile's scorn :  
On us they look with cruel sneer,  
Throw out on us the taunting jeer ;  
Bid us take up those harps again,  
And wake them to a Jewish strain ;—  
A song of Sion they demand  
From strangers in a stranger land !

## III.

How, Sion, shall we sing thy song  
To those, who do thy children wrong ?  
How to the spoiler mirthful be,  
Doomed to the woes of slavery ?  
Mock not the tears of those that sigh,  
He sees their grief, to whom they cry ;  
His power, ere long, will break their chain,  
And prove thy rage, Chaldean, vain !

## IV.

Jerusalem ! our mournful eye  
Turns to the spot, where ruined lie  
Thy buildings, towers and temples—all  
O'erturned, yet lovely in their fall !  
Sweet is this thought of days gone by,  
Of faded joys—how swift they fly !  
Of home and wife and children dear ;—  
We think of you—then flows the tear.

## V.

How long, O ! gracious Lord, how long  
Dwell we this gentile race among ?  
Arise, thou mighty one, arise,  
Avenge us of our enemies !  
Enough ! we feel an inward hope,  
That lifts our drooping spirit up ;  
The Lord, our Father's God, will shortly pour  
His vengeance on the haughty conqueror !

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MANUFACTURERS AND THEIR WORKFOLK.

*The “Castle,” Chester, May 20, 1840.*

Dear Sir,—Every right-minded man must deeply bewail the bitterness and wrath shewn by the manufacturers of your neighbourhood towards such of their workfolk as claim the right to choose for themselves in matters of religion. The scriptures enjoin upon all servants the faithful and dili-

gent discharge of the duties they have engaged to perform. They owe to their masters a conscientious and cheerful service; but these again are put in mind, that they too have a Master in heaven, and that they are not warranted in laying upon their brethren heavier burdens than they themselves, were they to change places, could carry, without reasonable ground of complaint. I say nothing here of the master's duty to give to his servant "just and equal" wages, though I am confident that there cannot be security and comfort in society, until those, who have more wealth and power in their hands than they need for their own sustenance and protection, take counsel together as to the best means of promoting the permanent interests of those, who are variously connected with and dependent upon them. It is the height of folly, as well as the extreme of wrong, in any individual or class of men to suppose themselves justified in getting all they can out of others, without reference to the fair and righteous claims which these their fellow-men have upon them for comfortable maintenance, in return for the services they have rendered, and are still willing to render, to society. These mutual relations of the poor to the rich, and of the rich to the poor, are so obvious, that it is impossible to conceive the existence of social harmony and order, where they are not regarded and attended to on both sides. He is a wicked man who would go about to set workmen against a good master, and he is not less wicked who suffers the hard and unfeeling taskmasters to injure and oppress those, whose necessities lay them at his mercy, without denouncing the wrong he does them, and pointing out the consequences to himself, as well as to society, of the conduct he has been guilty of.

Persecution for conscience sake is not less appalling than hateful, inasmuch as it shews the awful daring of those who, to their own impiety, add the hardihood of stepping between God and their brother man, endeavouring on the one hand to shut out the influences of heaven by truth, that would otherwise find their way into the hearts of the faithful; and on the other hand, as far as they can, compelling those, whose light they have put out, to wander in darkness, thereby perilling their present peace and their future weal. Persecution is a weapon that none but the unholy, the ignorant, and the fearful, ever have recourse to. The enlightened lover of truth, when he sees his neighbour go

astray, will shew him, by the evidence of reason, and the concurrent witness of his own good life, the more excellent way, in which he wishes him to walk. But this love worketh good, and not ill—speaks not in anger, but in kindness—makes its approval known by blessings, not by curses, on the head of those it strives to save. Truth is the rain that fattens, and the warmth that quickens—not the storm that lays waste the moral vegetation of the earth. How few there are, who can trust the truth they profess to hold so dear to God, its only source, and time, its faithful guardian and revealer. They act as though the wrath of man was a legitimate agent in working out the righteousness of God. Experience will have shewn you, ere this, that the spirit of persecution is not confined to the votaries of any one faith, or the members of any one body of nominal christians. Where does it not dwell? amongst whom have its baneful effects not been apparent? Shall not this teach us, first, still greater forbearance towards others? secondly, still greater watchfulness over ourselves, lest we fall into the same snare and commit the same sins? I hope the friends you have named will have strength of mind to bear what they have been called upon to suffer, as men and as christians. Great as the trial is, it is yet wholesome, and, if religiously endured, will lead to good, both to themselves and to others. Is not the present a period when some of the more profound admonitions and exhortations of God's word come home to us with especial force? "Brethren, ye have need of patience:" and again, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials." Let those, who from the heart love and fear God, now stand fast, rooted and grounded in the truth, that never yet has failed; let them put that truth to the proof, and they will find that as their day, so will their strength be. They will have more inward peace under their sufferings than they ever enjoyed perhaps before, whilst their fortitude and constancy will shew to all around, the inherent power and efficiency of the righteous principles they are thus enabled to maintain, in the midst of every species of opposition and violence. Give my love to these persecuted men. I admire and honour them. So long as they abide steadfast in their integrity, God will make a way for them. They will not be forsaken—nor will their children have to beg their bread. I pity these shortsighted persecutors. For a time they may make

others wretched—can they thereby make themselves the happier? They may rob the poor of their hard earned bread—can they thereby eat their own bread with a sweeter zest? They are but poisoning their own cup, and planting thorns in their own pillows. Stephens is far enough away out of their sight—his voice is no longer heard in their houses—his pen is forbidden to trace their names, much less to register their deeds;—and yet they cannot rest—they cannot let their poor neighbours rest! Unhappy men, when will they search out the true ground of their discomfort and alarm! When will they learn that the only way of peace is to unloose the heavy burden, to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty. I must leave them to their conscience and their God. One way or other, wisdom will be justified of her children.

Were not the subject too serious and too sad for smiles, I should laugh at the queer capers I see the jugglers cutting before the people. Those who tell you these were "times to try men's souls," have had their own souls, tried and, poor fellows, they have been found strangely wanting. They have said, sworn and done, as you tell me, every thing they could to keep out of prison! So much the worse for them, but so much the better for the lookers on. The people are not blind—nor have they been so fooled but they will begin to put things together, and see how they fit. In this respect the shocking trickery and shameful cowardice of the heroes will be of service. It will teach the simple wisdom, and give them understanding another day. Let them not forget what their own eyes have seen, what their own ears have heard. Experience is dearly bought, but it is worth the purchase when rightly applied. I am sorry to hear of the distress that now prevails in the manufacturing districts. You observe, that if the advice I have constantly given for the last five years had been attended to, this state of things would not have existed. True, it would not. Would to God I could now help you, most assuredly I would. But this is out of my power. I have however the consolation of knowing, not only that I did my duty when it was in my power, but that you, amongst whom I lived, acknowledge and commend the honesty and consistency of my career. This inspires me with the hope, that whilst I do not regret, much less murmur, at anything that has befallen me for

your sake, I may yet live to be of some service to you hereafter.

I have the same opinion of what are called "turn-outs" that I always had. I never knew them to lead to anything but evil; and, in the present state of the people, a "strike" cannot fail to plunge the nation more deeply in misery; and God knows they are deep enough in that horrible pit as it is. God help them for they seem to be forsaken on every side! I am more than half-way through my time, enjoying the best of health and in capital spirits. I am often amused when friends call to see me. They pull such long faces as they walk in, expecting of course to find me a miserable skeleton, and, for anything I know, chained to the wall! But as soon as they venture to look up at me, they burst out a laughing, with a "why, Stephens, how well you look—you are getting quite fat—I should hardly have known you," &c. Why yes, to be sure all I wanted was rest, and I have it. I am not such a fool as to grumble, and growl, and fret, and pine, and fidget, and make myself miserable. That would never do, John, either for myself, or for my friends, or for my foes, if I have any. I owe them all a debt, and, like an honest man, I intend to pay them some day—so I take care of myself, keep a light heart, mind my books, and let time jog along.

Give my kind love to all who like to hear from me. I hope, bad as the times are, there will be some fun stirring amongst the young ones this coming Whitsuntide. Are all the battledores and shuttlecocks, skiping ropes, cricket bats and footballs gone? Can't you get a field for the children to romp and play in, as they did at Ashton and Staleybridge last year and the year before? If you don't look after my little piecers whilst I am away, I will look after you when I come back, mind that. Bless them, let them have what bit of pleasure you can get them. Their holidays are few and far between, so make the most of them.

Yours, very truly,

J. R. STEPHENS,

## WORDS OF THE WISE.

## I.

“There is a time to keep silence,” saith king Solomon; but when I proceed to the first verse of the fourth chapter of the Ecclesiastes, “and consider all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side their oppressors there was power.”—I concluded this was *not* the “time to keep silence;” for truth should be spoken at all times, but more especially at these times, when to speak truth is dangerous.—S. T. COLERIDGE.

## II.

• Experience shews that in countries, remarkable for the lenity of their laws, the spirit of the inhabitants is as much affected by slight penalties, as in other countries by severe punishments. Mankind must not be governed with too much severity. We ought to make a prudent use of the means, which nature has given us to conduct them. Let us follow nature, who has given shame to man for his scourge; and let the heaviest part of the punishment be the infamy attending it. But if there be some countries, where shame is not a consequence of punishment, this must be owing to tyranny, which has inflicted the same penalties on honest men and villains. And if there are others, where men are deterred only by cruel punishments, we may be sure that this must, in a great measure, arise from the violence of the government, which has used such penalties for light transgressions. It often happens that a legislator, desirous of remedying an abuse, thinks of nothing else; his eyes are open only to this object, and shut to its inconveniences. When the abuse is redressed, you see only the severity of the legislator; yet there remains an evil in the state, that has sprung from this severity,—*the minds of the people are corrupted and become habituated to despotism.*

MONTESQUIEU.

## III.

So anxious has the English legislature been to establish mercy even to convicted offenders, as a fundamental principle of the government of England, that they made it an

express article of that great public compact, which was framed at the important era of the Revolution, that no cruel and unusual punishments should be used.—DE LOLME.

## IV.

“A wise man ought to have money in his head but not in his heart.—SWIFT.

## V.

Excessive barbarity can never be more than temporary ; it being impossible that it should be supported by a permanent system of legislation ; for if the laws be too cruel, they must be altered ; or anarchy and confusion will succeed.

BECCARIA.

## VI.

Fame is the wise man’s means ; his ends are his own good, and the good of society. Your poets and orators have inverted this order ; you propose fame as the end, and good, or at least great actions as the means.—BOLINBROKE.

## VII.

There be spirits that are created for vengeance, which in their fury lay on sore strokes. In the time of destruction they pour out their force, and appease the wrath of Him that made them. Fire, and hail, and famine, and death—all these were created for vengeance. Teeth of wild beasts and scorpions, serpents and the sword punishing the wicked to destruction. They shall rejoice in his commandment ; and they shall be ready upon the earth when need is ; and when their time is come, they shall not transgress His word.

THE SON OF SIRACH.

## VIII.

All disputes upon forms of government are nothing but fallacious theories put forward to facilitate a seizure of power, and again insult the same people by tyrannising over them under another name. This is really the truth, and those only are wise, who dread above all things double packsaddles with their double loads.—LIFE OF TALLEYRAND.

## IX.

The happiness of mankind is the *end* of virtue, and truth is the knowledge of the *means*, which he will never

seriously attempt to discover, who has not habitually interested himself in the welfare of others. *The searcher after truth must love and be beloved*, for general benevolence is begotten and rendered permanent by social and domestic affections. Let us beware of that reasoning, which affects to inculcate philanthropy, while it denounces every *home-bound feeling*, by which it is produced and nurtured.—S. T. COLERIDGE.

## X.

The way to have a public spirit is first to have a private one; for who can believe that any man can care for a hundred thousand men, who never cared for one. No ill-humoured man can ever be a patriot, any more than a friend.—POPE.

## XI.

I often thank God that the poor have their objects of admiration and attraction; their domestic affections and their family ties, out of which spring a thousand simple and substantial pleasures; that beauty and ability are not the exclusive growth of hall and palace; and that, in this country at least, the hand of arbitrary power dare seldom enter this charmed circle, and tear asunder husband from wife, parent from children, brother from sister, as it does in the lands of slavery. Yet our New Poor Laws have aimed a deadly blow at this blessed security; and till the sound feeling of the nation shall have again disarmed them of this fearful authority, every poor man's family is liable, on the occurrence of some chance stroke of destitution, to have to their misfortune, bitter enough in itself, added the tenfold aggravation of being torn asunder, and immured in the separate wards of a POVERTY PRISON. The very supposition is horrible; and if this system—this iron and undiscriminating system—a blind tyranny knowing no difference between accidental misfortune and habitual idleness—between worthy poverty and audacious imposition—between misfortune and crime—be the proudest of Philanthropy, may Philanthropy be sunk to the bottom of the sea.—WILLIAM HOWITT.

## XII.

The greatest and the wisest minds are those, of whom the world hears least,

## SPIRIT OF PARTY.

*The "Castle," Chester, May 27, 1840.*

My Dear Sir,

You say that my last letter has been of great use to you in opening your eyes to the mistake they fall into, who build their hopes of mutual and permanent good upon the professions of any party whatever. I may be wrong, but I have always thought that, looking at things as they are, there was no evil more fraught with danger than this same spirit of party, which associates men together in separate bodies, and, under the influence of false or imperfect impressions, ranges them in blind and deadly feud, the one against the other. So long as these little knots continue, and this spirit animates and sways them, I see nothing for it but endless strife, war following war, leading only to the putting down of one system and the setting up of another in its stead, both alike at variance with the true principles of social order, and alike incompetent to the work most wanted, namely the establishment of settled peace and good will amongst men. I have asked many of the stiffest up-holders of these opposite parties what they set before themselves as the end of their ascendancy, supposing it to be obtained, and the reins of power placed in their hands; but I can get no well defined and satisfactory answer from them. They do not seem to have studied human nature, or to have ascertained the real wants of universal man, with the probable means of affording a reasonable supply to those wants. They are hurried along by a blind and senseless faith, in the efficacy of what they call the principles of their system, to effect, some way or other, they know not how, all that man can wish; but the moment a practical question is put to them and a definite answer required, you see the unsoundness of the foundation on which they build, and the rottenness of the edifice they have reared upon it. You find that all this fight has been a fight of words, not things, at least not good things, such things as good men would agree to seek and struggle for. I do not question the sincerity of these zealous partizans. They mean well, many of them, no doubt; but this of itself is not enough to do lasting good, there must be knowledge as well as zeal. The good end we wish to reach must be forefollowed by wise

means. Truth must be the ground wall on which only happiness can be made to rest, whilst righteousness is the imperishable material, with which also the edifice can be built together. All this is so self-evident that many will be disposed to pass it over as unworthy of their attention ; but it is not therefore the less certain, that it is for want of attention to such worldsold and homely truths, that much, if not all, of our present contention and animosity, is to be ascribed. Could I but bring a few of you, of what creed or party soever, to meet on the same floor, feeling yourselves to be brethren and resolve not to fall out by the way, oh ! how happy it would make me ! All I have hitherto done or suffered is light as the thistle-down, and floats as idly by me, when I call to mind the end I have had, and still have, before me. I would have you lay down your weapons of social broil and cease your angry strife, because you *are* brethren and ought not thus to bite and tear one another. Bear and forbear, forgive and forget, shake hands and be friends ; sit down and talk things coolly over, and see what good thing all may agree in one to help forward and fully bring about. I believe, my dear sir, that you are ready to do this. Do you not know another, but one more, who is ready to join with you ? When you have met with such an one, go out together and seek a third, and so on, until you have a little band of likehearted men. A few such may do much, may do wonders, for in truth and love, there is a power, a mighty power, that nothing can long withstand. I have always laughed at opposition, however strong and fierce it may be. I laugh at it now as much as ever. The tidings of each passing hour tell me that the tree of truth has firmer hold on the soil than it ever had. Men have groped about after the truth, and they have found it at last. They are thinking about it, and thoughtfulness is the lifeshoot of the goodly seed that will, in due time, spread out its rich harvest before the hopefed and now happy reaper. It is a great thing for a nation to begin to think—it is the first step towards the bettering of their condition. That they should think aright at the onset, and all at once, is not to be looked for. Like a child learning to speak, or trying to walk, they will make many a slip, many a blunder, they will often be laughed at, and will sometimes find to their cost that experience is a dear school. But a main point is gained the

moment they begin to think. Should they come upon the true track, and fall in with safe and kindly guides, it will not be long before they will make good their way towards the object of their pursuit. It has been said that the people of this country will listen to any one, however foolish, and follow anything, however preposterous and impracticable. This is only true in a sense, and in part. The fact is, that the almanhood of any nation is simple, unsuspecting, and full of faith. With such qualities as the groundwork of their character, they may be misled by the fool, or the wilful betrayer; they may confide in the unworthy to their own injury and loss. It is so with the individual; it may be so with the multitude. But what then—what does it all amount to? Does the individual, often deceived, never grow wary? Shall the people, after going astray, never grow wise? Before the foundation of childish trust and love, with a yearning after good, what a building may we not hope to see, under the direction of wise master-builders, and the watchful oversight of the One, who is good, and whose ways all lead to good? I, for one, have this hope, and I feel as if nothing could extinguish it. When I cease to hope, let me cease to live, for what but a dreary wilderness were all the world without it? The motion of a well-grounded hope, either for ourselves or for others, is as the bubbling up of a spring of living water in a faint and thirsty land. Let nothing rob you of this feeling, nay, it is a principle in the heart of every true Christian. Your letters breathe somewhat of a desponding spirit, as if there were neither ransom nor rescue for the heavy-laden bonds-men of our brethren. I allow that darkness has settled on the immediate oversight of their fortunes. But what then,

“Though all be lost, hope is not lost,”

and to this hope I, at least, will cling, I will feed upon it whilst I live, and if I die without seeing the end of my faith, I will lay me down in hope that the eyes of my children will behold the glories of the goodly land that I was not allowed to gaze upon. As I do not wish your attention to be withdrawn from the chief subject of the above remarks. I shall say nothing at present on some other matters, about which you ask my opinion. I am anxious

just now to shew you, that the unlucky mishaps of the last two years, as you think them, are, after all, links in the chain. They have fallen out in the nature of things, and are only to be deplored in their immediate effects upon those who have personally suffered from them. I am persuaded that the people at large will find themselves gainers, not losers, by that which they now think makes so much against them. I told you that the rich would not begin to think until they saw the evil at the door, and that the poor would not begin to think until some of their best friends were taken away from them. If my removal from you has roused up those that slept, and set those athinking that were already awake, I shall not regret anything that has befallen me. I am satisfied when I know, and I do know, that hundreds and thousands of you are, at this moment, weighing well over the various events of the last two years. I shall find a great change when I leave this place, and I believe, on the whole, a change for the better; but be it for the better, or for the worse, I have so far done my share, and so far I have nothing to reproach myself with. I know, too, that there are some, and they not a few, who are quietly, and without ostentation giving a healthful tone to the opinions of the people. Delusions are passing away, and as the clouds fly off, the heavens clear up to the eye of the meditative and hopeful observer. So should it be, and so may it be, and yet more abundantly. The departure of these delusions is the dawn of unfading truth.

Take the earliest opportunity of remembering me to those whom it was once my happiness to address in thousands. They must now take the will for the deed, and, with yourself, believe that I still am their and your

Most faithful friend and servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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JULY, 1840.

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## ON THE DANGER OF FALLING INTO SECTARIANISM.

Dear Sir,

With the word of God for your guide, and a spirit of kindness and forbearance one towards another, you will not be likely to wander from the good old way into the byepaths of sectarianism and bigotry. It is not easy in these times to steer clear of every rock and shoal that lie so thickly scattered in your course; but I think you may shun the more obvious and dangerous of them, if you make use of ordinary vigilance and circumspection. Religion is nowadays made so very much an affair of rival sect and opposing party, that those, who really mean well, and wish to act differently, slide insensibly into the usages and customs of the various bodies by whom they are surrounded. This is greatly to be regretted, and ought to be most jealously watched against, by the true followers of our Lord Jesus Christ; because, whatever the reasons assigned for it may be, in proportion as the exclusive and separatist systems of the sects are adopted, in that proportion does the society of adopting them itself become a 'sect. The great law, by which those who come together for common good ought to be governed, is the simple, easily understood, and as easily applied principle or law of love. We love God, because he has first loved us; and we love one another for God's sake, for the sake of truth, righteousness and love. Besides this, all other rules should be few, and such as clearly flow from the first; such as in fact are only the varied adaptations of it, which the varied circumstances of our peculiar case manifestly require. We have no right to lay burdens upon others, which God has neither laid upon us, nor authorised us to lay upon our brethren. I am persuaded that the

decline and fall of all churches may be traced to the exercise of powers never entrusted to them from on high. One is our master ; we should look up to Him, learn of Him, follow Him, and help each other forward in the lessons of wisdom and love which He teaches alike to all. But when, instead of listening to the words which fall from His lips, we take upon ourselves to be wise above what is written, and lay down laws for our fellow-disciples, we are no longer humble followers of the one Lord of all, but usurpers and antichrists ; the blind lead the blind, and go blundering and stumbling along until both fall into some ditch of dangerous error. So long as you follow the plain precepts of holy scripture, there is no fear of your going wrong. It is the easiest thing in the world to say who is and who is not a fit member of the church of Christ ; and there never will, never can, be two words about it, where those, who say they are members, are swayed by His love, who came to make all one with God. And in like manner there need be no dispute or difference as to who ought to preach the word of reconciliation, or what principle ought to unite them together. The great work of snatching our fellow men out of the burning, will always be the first and the last business of true, zealous, and devoted ministers of the gospel. Frivolous and vexations, disputation on matters not enjoined in the word of God, prove either that they do not understand the nature of their high and holy calling, or, that they are beginning to grow slack and weary in it, and would fain cloak their coward, man-pleasing, time-serving spirit in the ostentatious disguise of extraordinary concern about points of order and discipline. There are some things which are essential, vital and indispensable. These ought always to be most steadfastly maintained. What God has bidden, man ought at once to do, and do with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. But there are other things which are secondary, circumstantial, or even doubtful. In these we ought to exercise our own freedom with a wise and cautious discretion, and ought to give the same freedom generously and affectionately to others. Thus shall we be agreed where we ought to be one, and where our measure of faith leads us in some things to act differently, we shall still be one heart and of one mind, one towards another, living and labouring together in love, which is the bond of peace and perfectness.

If these few thoughts be of any use to you in coming to a right judgment and practice, in the matters that have lately engaged your attention. I shall be glad, and hope you will believe me to remain,

Yours very truly,  
JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

P. S. Whatever you do, bear in mind that you are one, and on no account fall out by the way. It seems to me that many doors have been opened for you; and, if you will, you may enter in. There is work for each, for all, according to your several ability. Then love as brethren, and work as fellow labourers in the same vineyard. Let your only strife be who can do most good, bringing honour to God by conferring blessings upon man.

J. R. S.

Give my very kind love to all the Hyde friends. Tell them I keep well; my health improves every day. I hope they are well and doing well, as far as the bad times will let them.

You mention having written two letters, one on the 17th, the other on the 23rd ult. *I have only received that of the 17th, the other has not come to hand.* You had better enquire at the post office about it.

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J. R. S.

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## THE WHIG RURAL POLICE.

The immortal William Cobbett, in his celebrated attack on the whigs, in his famous speech when put upon his trial by the *liberal* whig reform government for an alleged libel, having the intent to raise discontent in the minds of the labourers, and to excite them to acts of violence, and to burn corn stacks, destroy machinery and other property, thus enumerates some of the many crimes which the *liberal* whigs have to answer for:—

“But the whigs were always a most tyrannical faction; they always tried to make tyranny double tyranny; they were always the most severe, the most grasping, the most greedy, the most tyrannical faction whose proceedings are recorded in history. It was they who seized what remained

of the CROWN LANDS; it was they who took to themselves the last portion of CHURCH PROPERTY; it was they who passed the MONSTROUS RIOT ACT; it was they who also passed the SEPTENNIAL BILL; it was they who created the ROTTEN BOROUGHHS; it was they who created the EXCISE LAWS." We have, since Mr. Cobbett's trial, to add to this horrible list of iniquities,—it was they who created the hellish new poor laws; it was they who declared, that the well being of once happy and proud England could not now be supported without the labours of 30,000 little children in the factory hell-holes; and, to wind up this horrid list of monstrous outrage upon a confiding nation, we have now to add the finishing stroke to the liberties of our country in saying, it was the liberal whigs who imprisoned hundreds of our countrymen for asking them for what they had promised; and these same *liberal* whigs, who as the *friends* of liberal government, created hundreds of their tools magistrates, and then commanded these magistrates,—oh, how unworthy the name!—to create a new standing army; not to march to the sound of the trumpet and drum, with all the pomp and parade of military honour and glory, no, no; but a sort of bastard soldiery, having dirtier work to do, and much higher pay than the regular soldier in red, in the old thundersing standing army. This new standing army, called by the epithet "police," is officered by fellows already feeding upon this horribly oppressed nation,—half-pay captains and the like,—who are to train this "blue police" to be military in every thing but IN HONOUR. They are to skulk about our lanes, pimping and peering into every honest man's doings. In short, this additional standing army is to be a sort of land of GOSHEN for all the worthless, idle, dis honourable scoundrels to find refuge in. And this "FORCE" is to preserve the peace and property of the country, is it? this horrible assemblage of the vilest mercenaries of the meanest of the scum of the three kingdoms, or of any nation, Jew or Mahometan: this "FORCE," which has the meanness to receive its *pay* from the POOR'S RATE, and to be dressed in blue cloth and dashing belts, paid for out of the poor's rate; this abhorrent herd is to *preserve* our property, is it? Why now, good hard-working weaver boys,—you especially at Stockport, whose masters have reformed so fast as to tell you that, in this year eighteen hundred and forty, they must have more of your wages,

which are your property:—weaver boys, do pray tell me, and do not fall into a rage with me when I have asked you, do pray tell me what assistance you are getting in the preservation of your property by this same *Blue Force*. Oh, I dare say you will say, “our reformed corporation, which consists of liberals, will not allow the police to interfere in our behalf.” But will they not interfere if you dare to deter other workmen from going to work at lower prices than yon have been accustomed to work for? Was not one of the special grounds for creating this new standing army that you weaver boys and spinners, and other operatives, were now and then so restive under the grindings down of wages, that you “made your masters find such difficulty in carrying on their trade here, that they declared they must either have a police to put you down, or they must take their capital to foreign countries, where the people would work for such low wages?” See the report of the evidence given by Mr. S. Robinson, of Dukinfield, in the report of the Commissioners on the Constabulary business.

Thus we have direct evidence that this Force, for the protection of the masters’ property, is created with the chief intent of depriving you of your wages, which are almost your only property. Nevertheless, you of Stockport will, when the election time comes, throw up your greasy caps and cry “Cobden for ever!” Oh, brave liberality! Admirable friends of the people, who take such care of liberty and property as to keep it almost all in their own possession! What rare friends of the people we have in the persons of Greg and Philips, of Manchester, sly Brotherton, of Salford, Hindly, of Ashton, Ewart, of Wigan, Walker, of Bury, and Fenton, of Rochdale. Really, one would be led to imagine, with such a formidable band of liberals to represent this district, we should never have known bad trade and bad times again. Surely their great wisdom and liberality should have done something more for us than putting men upon the bench who have so liberally filled the prisons with “*Misguided Chartist*s.” Surely their vast knowledge of business ought to have produced something of more service to us than rotten joint stock banks, which keep blowing up and filling the air with their pestiferous influence, withering every thing about them with a deadly blight. Let us never forget who it was, after all, that introduced this monstrous and despotic innovation upon our

ancient and free office of constable; never forget that the magistracy put upon the bench at the express recommendation of the Hindley's, Brotherton's, Philips's, the Greg's, Fenton's, and Walker's, and such like liberals, are the very men who have now filled our lanes with the skulking vermin, feeding upon our already overburthened poor's rate. Ah, my friends, these are things never to be forgotten. Above all things, bear in mind that these caitiff whigs have made a law, so nicely contrived for driving us into having this new standing army, that unless we have a corporation by virtue of a charter, granted by the Queen, empowering us to create those fantastical things called mayors, aldermen, and common-councillors, with a monstrous train of paid officers, such as recorders, law-clerks, coroners, public prosecutors, town-clerks—in truth, they are so many that we may well say their name is Legion,—whose power of taxing is unbounded. So here you see is a pretty choice, for, to escape the Sylla, we run upon Charybdis; or, in a more hacknied English phrase, we fall out of the frying-pan into the fire. Let us at any rate refuse their charters; depend upon it these charters, which cannot be forced upon us, are worse, infinitely worse than the new police which may be thrust upon us; but then, we know who the magistrates are who thus misappropriate the poor's rate, by keeping the new police with it; and it will be our duty to pray the crown to remove them from the commission of the peace; and it will also become our duty to obtain, by constitutional means, the power of appointing magistrates ourselves.

Let our watchword be, no New Poor Law, and no New Police; and let the parliament be besieged by our prayers to repeal these infamous laws; surely then these liberal men will listen to the voice of the country, and not persist in thrusting upon us laws so uncalled for, and so unnatural.

W.

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## WORDS OF THE WISE.

### I.

We love to overlook the boundaries, which we do not wish to pass; and, as the Roman satirist remarks—he, that has no design to take the life of another, is yet glad to have it in his hands. From the same principle, tending yet more

to degeneracy and corruption, proceeds the desire of investing lawful authority with terror, and governing by force rather than persuasion. A slight perusal of the laws, by which the measures of vindictive and coercive justice are established, will discover so many disproportions between crimes and punishments, such capricious distinctions of guilt, and such confusion of remissness and severity, as can scarcely be believed to have been produced by public wisdom, sincerely and calmly studious of public happiness.

Dr. JOHNSON.

## II.

I ever abominated that scheme of politics (now about thirty years old) of setting up a monied interest in opposition to the landed; for I conceived there could not be a truer maxim in our Government than this—that the possessors of the soil are the best judges of what is for the advantage of the kingdom.—SWIFT.

## III.

I have sometimes thought that if preachers, hangmen, and moral writers keep vice at a stand, or so much as retard its progress, they do as much as human nature admits. A real reformation is not to be brought about by ordinary means; it requires those extraordinary means, which become punishments as well as lessons. National corruption must be purged by national calamities.—BOLIN-BROKE.

## IV.

It is a strange desire which we have, to seek power and lose liberty.—BACON.

## V.

We are struck with horror when we read of the distress, that awaits the innocent traveller in wildernesses and deserts of foreign climes, or of the terrible fate, that wastes a ship's crew, when, in their sorest need, no vessel, no coast appears on the immeasurable expanse. We are struck with horror, when monsters of the deep tear to pieces the unfortunate mariner, and yet do we not live in great cities, as upon the peak of a promontary, immediately at our feet all this woe—the same horrible spectacle presents itself,

only more slowly, and therefore the more cruelly? But from the midst of our concerts and banquets, and from the safe hold of our opulence, we look down into this abyss, where the shapes of misery are tortured and wasted in a thousand fearful groups, as in Dante's imagery, and do not venture ever to raise their eyes to us, because they know what a cold look they meet, when their cry rouses us at times out of the torpor of our cold apathy.—TIECK.

## VI.

It is not the bread alone, but the place where you eat it.

## VII.

Certainly the highest good is to live happy, and not through a life of mortification to expect a happy death. Should we obtain felicity in life, death will be easy, as it will be natural and in due time. Whereas by the present system of *religious teaching* men are enjoined to value chiefly happiness at the end of life, which if they were implicitly to follow, they would, by neglecting the first great duty, that of innocent enjoyment during existence, effectually preclude themselves from attaining.—COLERIDGE.

## ON THE DEATH OF THE RICH MAN, &amp;c.

*The "Castle" Chester, May 20th.*

My Dear Sir,

I like to see you so light hearted and cheerful about your good friend in the gaol, and I hope every one else will be the same. What is a man good for, if he cannot abide this and far worse than this, when God and his country calls him to it? Time wears on apace, you see. It is now more than half over; and what remains will go all the quicker for knowing that so many true hearted friends are hastening it along, as fast as they can, with their prayers and best wishes. Our meeting will be all the sweeter, that I have not budged an inch either to keep out or to get out, and that they have heaped honour upon me, not by empty regrets and childish lamentations, but by doing every one his share, whilst I am separated from them,

to uphold and carry on the cause of God in the neighbourhood where they live, according to the ability they possess. It is very foolish, as well as a work of weakness, to whine and chunner over what you cannot help. He is not worth being called a man, who has not a mind ready for all that may befall him, strength to bear the hardships of his lot, with resolution and skill to make the best of every thing ; turning all to good, account and making a lasting gain of the heaviest loss he may have to bear. The improvement of the opportunities of the present moment is all we ought to be concerned about. Were we but determined to do this, we should be spared many a sigh ; and should see much and most precious fruit of our labour. As an old man, one of the fathers of the little flock, you know the full worth of this consideration, and can give it all the weight it ought to have with the people. Let me beg of you to make a point of doing so. Exhort all, young and old, to work while it is day—to bring every pious purpose into immediate practice. This is the only way to make, what we would, effective ; to fill up the at best, but short, measure of our days with such deeds as will gather around our death bed, when we come to die, like friendly messengers from heaven, sent to lead us to our home above.

You inform me of the sudden death of one of those rich men, whom, when amongst you. I strove to soften and reason into greater kindness towards their poorer neighbours. I was truly sorry to hear under what awful circumstances he was called away from his almost boundless wealth. There is scarcely anything that affects me more painfully than such events as that. But with the dead, peace, and, please God, with the living likewise peace ! Oh, that his brethren might listen to the voice from the grave, to which he has gone, and to which they too must shortly go, and begin from henceforth to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when they fail, they may be received into everlasting habitations. Warnings of this kind are, however, but little heeded. I dare say you must have marked, in your passage through life, how very little the character and conduct of men appears susceptible of impression, or alteration from instructive lessons read to them, after they have once chosen for themselves a course of action, and have by long continued habit confirmed themselves therein. They who

being often reproved, still harden their neck, are at last cut off suddenly, and that without remedy. This reflection ought to lead us all to a searching examination into our own state, that we may know whether we be ourselves indeed in the faith, or whether we are still in the power of any delusion, deceiving ourselves with a hope that has no sure and abiding ground. It ought also to make us more earnest and more zealous in our endeavour to give a holy bias to the character of those we associate with in life, especially of the young, who are more susceptible of good impressions, and more easily trained up in the way they should go.

I believe you are a conductor of the Mile Lane Sunday School. In that school there are, or were very lately, the children of a poor fellow, who has just left this gaol under sentence of transportation. He was very much distressed on their account, and begged I would take all the care of them I could in his absence. It made my heart ache to witness his anguish, when he spoke about them. Now, I want you to look after these fatherless little ones. Keep them in the school, and be very tender with them. See that none of the other children casts their father's shame in their teeth. Poor things, they will have enough to bear without that! He wishes them to attend the Charlestown Chapel. Pick out some two or three of the elder scholars or teachers, and request them to take them under their care and protection. Be so good as to call upon the mother, and if you can do anything amongst you, by advice or otherwise, towards enabling her to maintain herself creditably during her husband's absence, do so, and God and the poor things will bless you. I know nothing of them, but I know that they want help, above all the help of a little kindness, and I hope you will show it to them. I shall call to see them when I come to Ashton. Jonathan Walmsley will tell you where they live.

Whitsuntide is coming on. Are you getting all ready to make it a right merry time for the scholars? Battledores and shuttlecocks, skipping ropes and balls; not forgetting currant cakes and treacle beer. Let all be got ready. I shall look to have a good account of your sports and feasts. I cannot enter myself for the "foot-race" this year, but I hope to be in wind for it next year. Let me see, I think you were one that I beat two years ago. Look to yourself

or I shall beat you again in a while. Keep up these games for the children by all means. They have a right to all the harmless enjoyment you can provide for them. I am only sorry that these innocent recreations are going so much and so fast out of fashion. Do all you can to revive them. They are good both for body and mind, promoting health and conduced to cheerfulness. Give my very kind love to the teachers and scholars of Mile Lane School. I will have a letter ready for them against their recitation tea party. I am much obliged to them for thinking of me, and accept their kind invitation to the "Jubilee," which they intend to hold in honour of my liberation nine months hence. I hope they are attentive to their studies, diligent in their attendance, and obedient to the instructions of those, who take such pains to promote their improvement.

I wish you had better news to send me than the sad tidings of a another serious reduction in the wages of the already too poor mill-workers. But I knew too well the game that was playing, to wonder at it. It has been a long time a coming, and, unless I am mistaken, will in the end hurt others besides the immediate sufferers by it. It will be very unwise for the people to turn-out. They can do themselves no good, but are sure to do themselves a great deal of harm. I never knew a turn-out yet that ended well. Besides, just now, the people are like a flock of scattered sheep, surrounded by ravening wolves. Let them mind what they are about. Give my love to all, whether belonging to the society or not. I bear no hatred against any, but, contrariwise, good will, and would fain help them if I could.

I was much pleased, and felt highly honoured by the visit of two young friends from Mile Lane lately, who had been saving up their pocket money ever since I was imprisoned, on purpose to come over and see me. This proof of their attachment and esteem, has given me more real satisfaction and pride, than almost any other, that has been shewn me since I came here.

Remember me very affectionately to all friends, and to all the members of your kind family, and believe me to remain, their and your.

Most faithful friend and servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

## RECOLLECTIONS.

BY J. R. STEPHENS.

## I.

A truce to thoughts like these—those were my days  
 Of brightness, lightness, poetry and folly;  
 When I was wont to carol merry lays,  
 Or die away in pensive melancholy:—  
 Days careless, laughing, sighing—gone for ever—  
 Joyous or joyless—still by me forgotten never!

## II.

There is a something in the recollection  
 Of hours and scenes gone by I love to cherish;  
 They rise before me as the resurrection  
 Of things that lived; they go but not to perish—  
 Endeared the more as I am growing old,  
 Though time hath made me passionless and cold.

## III.

The world was new to me—I to the world;  
 Cloudless the rising of life's opening day;  
 Hope swelled the sails—the tiny billows curled  
 Playfully round my skiff—away, away—  
 I gallantly rode it before the wind;  
 All onward was fair, and unheeded was all behind!

## IV.

I heeded no rocks—for I saw no rock;  
 No rapids I feared, for no rapid was near:  
 And I sailed along, till the sudden shock  
 Shattered my bark—then bleak and drear  
 Was the coming of dark waves—one by one—  
 The illusion vanished—youth's bright dream was gone!

## ON THE ROBBERY OF THE HIRE OF THE WORKMAN, AND THE SPREAD OF INFIDELITY.

*The "Castle," Chester.*

My Dear Sir,

The tidings you have sent me of the dearth and suffering around you are sorrowful indeed. I wish I could comfort myself by thinking that things were otherwise elsewhere, and that with you all would be well again in a little time. But I can do neither the one nor the other. From one end of the land to the other there is the same slackness in business, and the same want of bread, that always follows the want of work. But in truth, it makes but small odds *now*, whether we are employed or not; the full wages of such as sweat for fourteen or sixteen hours a day being hardly what will keep the man himself alive, to say nothing of his wife and little ones. I know of nothing so disheartening as for a human being to toil hard, and long, and cheerfully besides, and not receive a fair reward for it in return. The workman, says Jesus Christ, is worthy of his wages, that is, his meat; that is, of all he needs to supply his every want as a being born for life, for death, and for the life everlasting. Every one of us feels his own right to this and none of us without heavy wrong, can withhold it from his neighbour. When this due hire is kept back from the workman, his sense of the injury he has sustained, and our sense of the injury we have inflicted upon him, operate alike to the derangement of society. He knows how deeply he has been wronged, and makes ready to take again that, which by force or by fraud has been taken from him; we know that we have done the wrong, and are driven, in defence of the false position we have assumed, to employ the strong arm of violence, made into law for the occasion, in order to make him submit to the injustice we have committed, and prevent his rising up against us to recover his own natural and morally legal rights. This is the true reason why poverty, and, what is called, crime, go hand in hand. When tens of thousands of handcraftsmen wander away from their once happy homesteads, and spread themselves over the country seeking employment, and begging bread, there must be a corresponding increase of policemen to watch the starving tramps, and keep guard over the stuff,

that may come in their way, as they pass hungry-bitten, thirsty, cold, and naked along. And so in towns like yours, and many others near Manchester, and in Manchester itself, where, as you tell me, swarms of poor wretches, as their last shift before they take to worse, go up and down the streets singing before the houses of the neighbours, almost as poor as themselves, hoping that the sight of the haggard cheeks and sunken craving eyes of their famished families, may bring them a crust or two to help them over another day ! As for the morrow, they know not, and hardly care, *now*, what it will bring forth. They are done up—quite broken down. All the loves, the joys, and even the ties of life, are gone. They have nothing left to hold them to society, which has cast them loose, and sent them drifting down the rapids of misfortune, to be swallowed up in the whirlpools of despair, can we wonder that, in their prayer for death to set them free from all this woe, they should cry to God that he would not forget them, nor fail to hold his own word in the hour of their extremity—that he would not suffer them to die unavenged as they have lived—unpitied and unholpen ? Of course there will be a great filling of workhouses and of gaols, and a rapid building of fresh ones, to answer the demand made for them for this new state of society. Goals, workhouses, police, soldiers, beerhouses, gin shops, madhouses, and, in some respects, churches and chapels too, are but so many tokens of the height to which the tide has risen. At the best, they are but weak breakwaters against the incoming flood—but treacherous bulwarks against the legion enemy, that society has armed against herself. They may disguise, and even palliate the evil for a time ; but they cannot take it away. They cannot hinder its frightful growth. And so with this new corn-law repeal cry, that has been raised. Repeal the so much hated law to-morrow, and what have you done ? You have not provided for the dearth, the want, the suffering and the rising up of the poor against the rich, which will take place the very day after, because you have made no provision for securing to the workman the wages spoken of before, of which he is worthy, and without which he cannot and will not rest. The prayer of Agar is grounded on the only true principles of political economy. He says “give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee and say, who

is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." According to this prayer it seems, as I said at the beginning, that want leads to violence, to recover what has been withdrawn or is withheld; and that over much wealth leads to a hardheartedness, that neither fears God nor regards man, and does not scruple, when full of bread, to deny God by denying the claims of others for their fair share of the good things he has freely bestowed upon all. Now, where do you find anything of this kind taken into the account in the "agitations" carried on amongst you? Is there any attempt to grapple with this evil—this ground-evil in the present constitution of society? You know that there is not. The sufferings of the wretched and unhappy people are made use of as a means of working them up to very madness, that they may be the more easily led to insist upon having such things done as their leaders tell them would put all to rights. You are not so young but you have lived to see two or three juggles of this sort played off upon them, and I ask you whether the last estate of the miserable dupes of these deceivers has not always been worse than the first. And it will be so again. If what you tell me be really true, that the people are tired of meeting, tired of reading, and tired of petitioning parliament, it is the best and most hopeful token you could have. When they have done with all this, they will perhaps begin to think for themselves. They will undertake the work I would have set them upon long ago. Not until they think for themselves and talk one to another as men, as friends and neighbours, not as this man's slaves or that man's blind followers; not until they make up their minds and shew a will of their own—not until they find out what is *indeed* the *master-evil*, the plague sore in the social frame—not until, fearing God, loving one another and free from all fear of what man can do unto them, they lay the axe to the root of the tree, and resolve to bring it down and burn it with fire; not, I say, till they feel themselves men and sons of God, will an end be put to the wild and senseless proceedings which you mention. You say that the major part of the working people put more confidence in my advice than in that of any of their so called leaders. This is not quite true. I know that a many of them do, and that many more would do so if they were free from the shackles of "liberty leaders," the men, who of

all others are the grimmest tyrants upon earth. But I believe it is true that there is a greater disposition shewn by the people to think and act for themselves. The more this is done the sooner will they come at the truth. It is the truth alone that can make them free indeed.

The spread of infidelity is another mark of breaking up of the old state of society. When the ministers of religion "declare the whole counsel of God," His will, and law, and truth, are magnified and made honourable in the sight of the people. Those, whom God has set to be lights to the world, are to let their light shine before men, that, seeing their good works, they may glorify Him, who would be known amongst them as the Father of all mankind. When those good works are no longer wrought, when the will of God is no longer set forth, and his law proclaimed, a terror to evildoers, and a praise to such as do well, then must we expect to see religion, identified with its professed teachers and ministers, fall into contempt. And when once a nation loses its hold on God, they have no longer any hold on one another. Who *now* can trust his brother? Every where you behold doubt, suspicion, jealousy, evil surmising, evil speaking, hatred, malice, and revenge. This is the age of infidelity, but it will not prevail finally. I fear it will reign for a time. The greatest service you or any other worshipper of God can render your country just now, is to call upon them to awake to righteousness; to open their eyes to the wonders of God's word, and seek in that word the knowledge of His will. You say I have worked hard and done much good, and have much more to do hereafter. I have done what little I could from the heart, and still feel willing, should it be in my power hereafter, to do what God shall give me strength and opportunity to accomplish. God bless you, and make you a blessing to many. I am, faithfully yours,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

P. S. I did not receive your *first* letter, or I should have answered it. Lose no time in enquiring at the post office. This is the second letter from Hyde, which has miscarried. I answer all letters that are sent to me. Should there be any other person who has written to me and received no answer, let him go to the post office to know the reason why his letters are detained. There must be some gross neglect somewhere.

J. R. S.

## ON TRUE RELIGION.

*The "Castle," Chester, May 22nd.*

My Dear Sir,

Religion will do but little for us, unless we diligently attend to the means, which reason and experience have proved to be best calculated to fasten its hold upon the mind, and exert a steady influence upon our conduct through life. Occasional impressions, however deep, sudden bursts of feeling, however violent, and passing resolutions, however sincere, will of themselves avail us nothing. They will injure rather than benefit us, by exciting hopes that are not likely to be realised, and, what is still worse, by so weakening our moral powers as to make us almost incapable of anything like healthy and vigorous and action, in the important concerns of our spiritual being. Whatever has a tendency to create and keep up the belief that our religious state is dependent upon agencies and appliances, foreign from and unconnected with our own mind, and our own powers of concurrence and co-operation, is fraught with danger, and should be most carefully guarded against. It is true that the soul's life and health is of God. But the way by which he gives and fosters that life, is by working in us to will and to do whatsoever things are true and good, right and lovely. From the first breath we draw of this new and heavenly life, ours is the sweet but solemn task of working together with God, its author and finisher, until the mighty work be fully done. Hence it becomes our duty to know God in ourselves, and in the world wherein we have our being, to cultivate that conscience, through whose voice God speaks to warn or to encourage us as we move on in the midsts of objects, which, according to their particular character, affect us either for good or for evil, and by practising the precepts His holy word inculcates, to strengthen ourselves in the continuous struggles of piety, until we reach the height of full grown manhood, in all things like Christ our head. Has it never struck you what a great difference, not to say contrast, there is between the tone of Christ's piety, and that which is infused by the spirit of modern christianity? If there ever was a mind

whose springs of action were bared, and laid open to the view, it was the mind of the blessed Jesus, our Saviour and our model. We ought never to forget that it is in His steps we are to tread, that the mind that was in Him is also to be in us, that His words are to dwell in us richly in all wisdom, and that as He walked in the light of pure, unmixed truth, we likewise are to walk in the same cloudless light of heavenly day. Now in Him, our great example, we can perceive no traces of any thing that bears the least resemblance to the delusive fancies I have adverted to; there was no looking for strange powers from without—no building upon inward feelings, awakened by these imaginary powers—no trusting to the accomplishment of the ends of religion, without a due regard to the means by which alone those ends can be brought about. In Him, piety was a principle, not a fitful passion; uniform character, not occasional impulse, the beautiful and stately action of the hidden man of the heart, not the irregular driftwork of impetuous and uncontrollable excitement. His piety was uttered in deeds, rather than in words; and oh! what deeds were his. He went about doing good, and by this unbroken march of benevolence, made Himself and the Father known to us, full of grace and truth.

How shall we be like Him; how shall we go and do likewise? Surely by not placing reliance upon any thing we vainly imagine religion will do for us, whilst Christ himself, in all he spake and wrought, is not yet formed in us the hope of glory. We must have His mind. Christianity, the spirit of Christ, must mould our character, must make us like Him, whose children we profess to be. We then begin to be like Him, when we love holiness and work righteousness, the love of truth and goodness being the very breath of our life.

If you are in earnest, as I know you are, to spread the living truth of God amongst your fellow-men, shew them what it really is as you find it written, and as you feel it working in your own heart. It is far better to allow God himself to speak by his own word, and to give the mind freely and fully up to take in the meaning of that word, and the power that always follows the simple apprehension of the truth, than pre-occupied with opinions received from inferior sources to put our own interpretation upon that which was written for our learning, and then perhaps

pervert it to our own hurt, and to the injury of others. We ought to be very jealous of the encroaching influence of the traditions of men. How ever well meaning the first ex-pounders may have been in their novel explanations of holy scripture, however useful the tendancy of their doctrines may at first appear, and however beneficial the effect produced upon the immediate votaries of a human creed, there nothing is like going again to the fountain-head, to drink of the living water as it gushes fresh and clear from the springs of truth. I cannot help thinking that the Bible is much less read than is commonly supposed, and I am sure it is much less thought over and dwelt upon than it ought to be, even by those that prize it most. It is not easy, I am well aware, to free the mind from prejudices which have grown up with its growth, and strengthened with its strength; it is not easy to burst asunder the shackles of the party to which we were handed over at our very birth, to receive spiritual instruction and direction; it is not easy, above all, to bow the evil will itself, sin-smitten and sin-tainted as it is, and bring it, like a child rushing back from its shame into its forgiving father's arms, in submissive docileness, to hear what God the Lord will speak concerning us. These things are not easy to be done, but they may be done, and they must be done before we can see the light in His light, who enlighteneth every man that comes into the world. Oh! how sweet the soul's rest when this is done. God's ways are then ways of pleasantness and His paths peace.

This yielding up of the whole man, body, soul and spirit to the guidance of the truth as it is in Jesus, I look upon as the ground work of true religion. God and man, the mind and the mind's dread maker, the sinful soul and the sinful soul's Healer and Helper, must meet together, and reason of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The Holy Ghost must inbreathe the breath of a new life, and each beating pulse of this new existence must obey its great origin and end. He only is in the right way and happy in it, who is one with God. Before this union takes place all is darkness, with now and then a fitful glimmer of light that makes the darkness visible; all is inward strife, which, if not ended in time, hurries the wretched struggler on, until evil gains the full mastery over him. To make man partaker of the blessings of the gospel, he must become the friend of God. This friendship can only begin with a true knowledge of

God and ourselves, as we have to do and to deal the one with the other ; and never will begin, save when we are willing to yield ourselves up unto Him as alive from the dead. The religious education given in our sects is vitally defective in this—that it tends to elevate a second mediator between God and man. The direct and immediate intercourse between God and the soul, is superseded by the tutelary discipline framed in accordance with the man-made creed. The individual disciple is merged in the community, and, takes his faith, his character, and the rule for the regulation of his life, from the sect of which he is a member. Instead of being a worker together with God in working out his own salvation, he is moulded and acted upon by the human agency, which is thus brought to act upon him. The true “means of grace,” that is, the mode in which the Holy Spirit conveys to the soul the riches of God’s goodness, and the way in which the soul holds fellowship with its redeeming Lord, are, either exchanged for others of man’s device, or are greatly weakened in their power and efficacy by an unhallowed mixture with things that profit not.

Preach the gospel, then, by striving to lead men to a knowledge of the only true God and of Jesus Christ, whom He has sent ; this is everlasting life.

I am, yours truly,  
JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

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## THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

Made by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the  
COMMONS assembled at *Westminster*, assented to and  
confirmed, by *WILLIAM* Prince of *Orange* and the  
Princess *MARY*, previous to the offer made them of  
the Crown, by the Convention, February 13, 1689.

WHEREAS the late King *James* the second, by the assistance of divers evil counsellors, judges, and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate

the protestant religion, and the laws and liberties of this kingdom ; by assuming and exercising a power of dispensing with, and suspending of laws, without consent of parliament : by committing and prosecuting divers worthy prelates, for humbly petitioning to be excused from concurring to the said assumed power : by issuing and causing to be executed, a commission under the great seal, for erecting a court called, The court of commissioners for ecclesiastical causes : by levying money for and to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, for other time, and in other manner, than the same was granted by parliament. By raising and keeping a standing army within this kingdom in time of peace, without consent of parliament ; and quartering soldiers contrary to law. By causing divers good subjects, being protestants ; to be disarmed, at the same time when papists were both armed and employed contrary to law. By violating the freedom of election of members to serve in parliament. By prosecutions in the court of king's bench for matters and causes cognizable only in parliament ; and by divers and other arbitrary and illegal courses. And whereas of late years, partial, corrupt, and unqualified persons have been returned and served on juries in trials, and particularly divers jurors in trials for high treason, which were not freeholders ; and excessive bail hath been required of persons committed in criminal cases, to elude the benefit of the laws made for the liberty of the subjects ; and excessive fines have been imposed ; and illegal and cruel punishments inflicted ; and several grants and promises made of fines and forfeitures, before any conviction or judgment against the persons upon whom the same were to be levied. All which are utterly and directly contrary to the known laws and statutes, and freedom of this realm.

And whereas the said king *James* the second having abdicated the government, and the throne being thereby vacant, his highness the prince of *Orange* (whom it hath pleased Almighty God to make the glorious instrument of delivering this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power) did (by the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, and divers principal persons of the commons) cause letters to be written to the lords spiritual and temporal, being protestants, and other letters to the several counties, cities, universities, boroughs, and cinque-ports, for the choosing of such persons

to represent them, as were of right to be sent to parliament, to meet and sit at *Westminster* upon the twenty second day of *January*, in the year 1688, in order to such an establishment, as that their religion, laws, and liberties might not again be in danger of being subverted. Upon which letters, elections have been accordingly made; and thereupon the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, pursuant to their several letters and elections, being now assembled in a full and free representative of this nation, taking into their most serious consideration the best means for attaining the ends aforesaid, do in the first place (as their ancestors in like case have usually done) for vindicating and asserting their ancient rights and liberties; declare,

1. That the pretended power of suspending laws, or execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of parliament, is illegal.
2. That the pretended power of dispensing with laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal.
3. That the commission for erecting the late court of commissioners for ecclesiastical causes, and all other commissions and courts of the like nature, are illegal and pernicious.
4. That the levying of money for or to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, without grant of parliament, for longer time, or in any other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal.
5. That it is the right of the subjects to petition the king, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning, are illegal.
6. That raising and keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of parliament, is against law.
7. That the subjects, which are protestants, may have arms for their defence suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law.
8. That elections of members of parliament ought to be free.
9. That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of parliament.
10. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

11. That jurors ought to be duly empanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon men in trials of high treason ought to be freeholders.

12. That all grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons, before conviction, are illegal and void.

13. And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently.

And they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises, as their undoubted rights and liberties. And no declarations, judgments, doings, or proceedings, to the prejudice of the people in any of the said premises, ought in any wise to be drawn hereafter into consequence or example. To which demand of their rights they are particularly encouraged by the declaration of his highness the prince of *Orange*, as being the only means for obtaining a full redress and remedy therein.

Having therefore an entire confidence, that his said highness the prince of *Orange* will perfect the deliverance so far advanced by him, and will still preserve them from the violation of their rights, which they have here asserted, and from all other attempts upon their religion, rights and liberties; the lords spiritual and temporal, assembled at *Westminster*, do resolve, That *WILLIAM* and *MARY*, prince and princess of *Orange*, be, and be declared king and queen of *England*, *France* and *Ireland*, and the dominions thereunto belonging, to hold the crown and royal dignity of the said kingdoms and dominions to them the said prince and princess, during their lives and the life of the survivor of them; and that the sole and full exercise of the regal power be only in, and executed by the said prince of *Orange*, in the names of the said prince and princess during their joint lives; and after their decease the said crown and royal dignity of the said kingdoms and dominions to be to the heir of the body of the said princess; and for default of such issue, to the princess *Anne* of *Denmark*, and the heirs of her body; and for default of such issue, to the heirs of the body of the said prince of *Orange*.

And the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, do pray the said prince and princess of *Orange* to accept the same accordingly. And that the oaths hereafter mentioned be taken by all persons of whom the oaths of allegiance and supremacy might be required by law, instead

of them ; and that the said oaths of allegiance and supremacy be abrogated. I *A. B.* do sincerely promise and swear, That I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to their majesties, king *William* and queen *Mary*. So help me God. I *A. B.* do swear, That I do from my heart abhor, detest and abjure, as impious and heretical, this damnable doctrine and position, that princes excommunicated or deprived by the *Pope*, or any authority of the see of *Rome*, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare, That no foreign prince, person, prelate, state or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority ecclesiastical, or spiritual, within this realm. So help me God.

We have inserted the Bill of Rights, in order that the people may not forget the principles contained therein.

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THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.—PSALM XXIII.

(AIR, JESSE.)

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By J. R. STEPHENS.

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I.

Yes, the Lord is my Shepherd and he will provide  
 A pasture, where blooms the rich verdure of spring :  
 Where rivers of pleasure meandering glide,  
 And around me the tall trees their broad shadows fling. •  
 He will lead to a fold, that no foe dare invade,  
 Where the sun in the day cannot scorch by his heat ;  
 Nor the rude blasts of winter assail the blest shade,  
 Which, peaceful and fearless, I make my retreat.

II.

Then no more shall my soul be the prey of keen anguish,  
 Though afflictions deep waters roll awfully high ;  
 Though fierce be the furnace, no more will I languish,  
 Since Jehovah, my Shepherd and keeper, is nigh.  
 Though dark be the valley, the Lord is beside me,  
 Though gloomy its terrors, they soon will be past ;  
 His rod and His staff through all dangers shall guide me,  
 And in safety conduct me to heaven at last !

# STEPHENS' MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1840.

## THE POPULATION QUESTION; OR, THE LABOURERS AND IDLERS.

COBBETT *versus* MALTHUS.

In laying before the public a reprint of the two famous letters to PARSON MALTHUS, by the great WILLIAM COBBETT, the unvaried and persevering friend of the Labourers of England and the arch foe of corruption and misgovernment, we do not need to say more than the old saw, of "good wine needs no bush." However, as twenty years have passed away since the publication of these letters, and a new generation have arisen, in whose ears the cuckoo cry of "increased population," "vast improvements," "great march of intellect," are for ever rung by the Philosophers of the day, we think we shall be doing a great public service by once more laying before the people the admirable exposure of the New Poor Law fallacies, and the wicked propositions of the Malthusian crew who have so long vexed the country.

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PARSON,

I have, during my life, detested many men; but never any one so much as you. Your book on POPULATION contains matter more offensive to my feelings even than that of the Dungeon Bill. It could have sprung from no mind not capable of dictating acts of greater cruelty than any recorded in the history of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Priests have, in all ages been remarkable for cool and deliberate and unrelenting cruelty; but it seems to have been reserved for the Church of England to produce one who has a just claim to the atrocious pre-eminence. No assemblage of words can give an appropriate designation of you; and, therefore as being the single word which best suits the character of such

a man, I call you *Parson*, which, amongst other meanings includes that of Boroughmonger Tool.

It must be very clear to every attentive reader of your book on *Population*, that it was written for the sole purpose of preparing beforehand a justification for those deeds of injustice and cruelty, of which the *Parish Vestry Bill* appears to be a mere prelude. The project will fail: the tyrants will not have the *power* to commit the deeds, which you recommend, and which they intend to commit. But, that is no matter. It is right that the scheme should be exposed; in order that, as we ought to take the will for the deed, we may be prepared to do justice to the schemer and to the intended executors of the scheme.

In your book you shew that in certain cases, a *crowded* population has been attended with great evils, a great deal of unhappiness misery and human degradation. You then, without any reason to bear you out, predict, or leave it to be clearly inferred, that the same is likely to take place in England. Your principles are almost all false; and your reasoning, in almost every instance, is the same. But, it is not my intention to waste my time on your abstract matter, I shall come, at once, to your practical result; to your recommendations to the Boroughmongers to pass laws to *punish the poor for marrying*.

I have in my possession a list of 743 parsons (of the Church of England I mean) who have taken an active part in the Dungeon and Oliver proceedings, either as justices of the peace, or as suppressors, unlawfully, of my publications. They have threatened hawkers; they have imprisoned many; they have starved the families of not a few; they have threatened booksellers; they have, in many instances (not less than twenty that have come to my knowledge) caused "*Paper against Gold*" to be excluded from *reading rooms*, though that is a work which ought to be read by every one, high as well as low, rich as well as poor. I must hate these execrable Parsons; but, the whole mass put together is not, to me, an object of such perfect execration as you are. You are, in my opinion, a man (if we give you the name) not to be expostulated with; but to be punished. And I beg the public to regard this paper of mine as intended merely to prove, that you deserve the severest punishment that outraged laws can inflict upon you.

The bare idea of a *law* to punish a labourer and artizan for *marrying* ! the bare idea is enough to fill one with indignation and horror. But, when this is moulded into a distinct proposal and strong recommendation, we can hardly find patience sufficient to restrain us from breaking out into a volley of curses on the head of the proposer, be he who he may. What, then, can describe our feelings, when we find that this proposition does not come from an *Eunuch*; no, nor from a *Hermit*; no, nor from a man who has condemned *himself* to a life of *Celibacy*; but from a *Priest* of a church, the origin of which was the incontinence of its clergy, who represented views of chastity as amongst the damnable errors of the Church of Rome, and have, accordingly, fully indulged themselves in carnal enjoyments: what can describe our feelings, when we find that the proposition comes from a Priest of this luxurious, this voluptuous, this sensual fraternity, who, with all their piety, were unable to devote their own vessels to the Lord !

But, before I proceed further, let us have your proposition before us in your own insolent words; first observing, that at the time when you wrote your book, the Boroughmongers began to be alarmed at the increase of the *Poor rates*. They boasted of wonderful *national prosperity*; wonderful ease and happiness; wonderful improvements in agriculture; but still the poor rates *wonderfully increased*. Indeed, they seemed to increase with the *increase* of the Boroughmongers *national prosperity*; which might, I think, very fairly be called the eighth wonder of the world.

Being in this puzzle, the Boroughmongers found in a Priest the advocate of a method to rid them of their ground of alarm. You, overlooking, all the *real causes* of the increase of the paupers, assumed, without any internal proof and against all experience, that *the giving of relief* is the cause of the evil; and then you came to your proposition of a *remedy*. The words, the infamous words, are as follows:

“ To this end I should propose a regulation to be made declaring, that no *child* born from any marriage taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate *child* born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. After the public notice, which I have proposed, had been given, to the punishment of nature HE should be left; the punishment of

severe want ; all parish assistance should be rigidly denied him . He should be taught that the laws of nature had doomed him and *his family* to starve ; that HE had no claim on society for the smallest portion of food ; that if HE and *his family* were saved from suffering the utmost extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of some kind benefactor, to whom HE ought to be bound by the strongest ties of gratitude."

I never yet knew a Parson that understood *grammar*, so that I am little surprised at this HE, which according to the words, means *the child* (though it may be a *girl*) ; but which HE does, I suppose, mean the *man*, who shall dare to marry or to have a bastard by some unmarried woman ; and yet in this latter case, what mean you by talking of the man's *family*? Cruel, impudent, and muddleheaded ; a Parson all through ! I will, however, suppose you, by HE, to mean the *man* ; and will, if I can, coolly remark upon this atrocious proposition.

You talk of the "*punishment of nature*" ; you talk of "*the laws of nature* having doomed him and his family to *starve*." Now, in the first place, the laws of nature ; the most imperative of all her laws, bid him *love* and seek the gratification of that passion in a way that leads to the procreation of his species. The laws of nature bid man as well as woman desire to produce and preserve children. Your prohibition is in the face of these imperative laws ; for you punish illegitimate as well as the legitimate offspring. I shall not talk to you about *religion*, for I shall suppose you, being a Parson, care little about that. I will not remind you, that the articles of the Church, to which articles you have *sworn*, reprobate the doctrine of celibacy, as being hostile to the word of God ; that the same article declares that it is lawful for all Christian men to marry ; that one of the Church prayers beseeches God that the married pair may be fruitful in children ; that another prayer calls little children as arrows in the hand of the giant, and says that the man is happy who has his quiver full of them ; that the scripture tell us that **LOT**'s neighbours were consumed by fire and brimstone, and that **ONAN** was stricken dead ; that adultery and fornication are held, in the New Testament, to be deadly sins : I will not dwell upon anything in this way, because you, being a Parson, would laugh in my face. I will take you on your

own ground; the *laws of nature*.

The laws of nature, written in our passions, desires, and propensities; written even in the organization of our bodies; these laws compel the two sexes to hold that sort of intercourse, which produces children. Yes, say you; but nature has *other laws*, and amongst those are, that man shall live by *food*, and that if he cannot obtain food, he shall *starve*. Agreed, and if there be a man in England who cannot find, *in the whole country* food enough to keep him alive, I allow that *nature has doomed him to starve*. If, in no shop, house, mill, barn, or other place, he can find food sufficient to keep him alive; then, I allow that the laws of nature condemn him to die.

“Oh!” you will, with Parson-like bawl, exclaim, “but he must not commit *robbery* or *larceny*! Robbery or Larceny! what do you mean by that? Does the law of *nature* say anything about robbery or larceny? Does the law of nature know any thing of these things? No: the law of nature bids man to take, whenever he can find it, whatever is necessary to his life, health, and ease. So, you will quit the law of nature *now*, will you? You will only take it as far as serves your purpose of cruelty. You will take it to sanction your barbarity: but will fling it away when it offers the man food.

Your muddled Parson’s head has led you into confusion here. The *law of nature* bids a man *not starve* in a land of plenty, and forbids his being punished for taking food wherever he can find it. Your law of nature is sitting at Westminster, to make the labourer pay taxes, to make him fight for the safety of the land, to bind him in allegiance, and when he is poor and hungry, to cast him off to starve, or, to hang him if he takes food to save his life! That is your law of nature; that is a Parson’s law of nature. I am glad, however, that you blundered upon the law of nature; because that is the very ground, on which I mean to start in endeavouring clearly to establish the *Rights of the Poor*; on which subject I have indeed lately offered some observations to the public, but on which subject I have not dwelt so fully as its importance seemed to demand; especially at a time, when the poor ought to understand clearly what their rights are.

When nature (for God and religion is out of the question with Parsons); when nature causes a country to exist and people

to exist in it, she leaves the people, as she does other animals, to live as they can ; to follow their own inclinations and propensities ; to exert their skill and strength for their own advantage, or, rather, at their pleasure. She imposes no shackles other than those which the heart and mind themselves suggest. She gives no man dominion over another man, except that dominion which grows out of superior cunning or bodily strength. She gives to no man any portion of the earth or of its fruits for his own exclusive enjoyment. And, if any man in such a state of things, cannot get food sufficient to keep him alive, he must die ; and, it may truly enough, *then*, be said that the “laws of nature have doomed him to be starved.

But, when this state of things is wholly changed ; when the people come to an agreement to desist, *for their mutual benefit*, from using their cunning and strength at their sole will and pleasure. When the strong man agrees to give up the advantage which nature has given him, in order that he may enjoy the greater advantage of those regulations which give *protection to all*, he surely must be understood to suppose as a condition, that no state of things is ever to arise, in which he, without having broken the compact on his part, is to be refused, not only protection from harm, but even the bare means of existence.

The land, the trees, the fruits, the herbage, the roots are by the law of nature, the common possession, of all the people. The social compact entered into for their mutual *benefit* and *protection* ; not Castlereagh’s “*social system*,” which means the employment of spies and blood-money men and the existence of mutual suspicion and constant danger to life and limb. The social compact gives rise, at once, to the words *mine* and *thine*. Men exert their skill and strength upon particular spots of land. These become *their own*. And, when laws come to be made, these spots are called the *property* of the owners. But still the property, in land, especially, can never be so *complete* and *absolute* as to give to the proprietors the right of withholding the means of existence, or of animal enjoyment, from any portion of the people ; seeing that the very foundation of the compact, was, the *protection* and *benefit* of the whole. Men, in agreeing to give up their rights to a common enjoyment, of the land and its fruits, never could mean to give up, in any contingency, their right to *live* and to *love* and to seek the gratification of desires necessary

to the perpetuating of their species. And, if a contingency arise, in which men, without the commission of any crime on their part, are unable by moderate labour that they do perform, or are willing to perform, or by contributions from those who have food to obtain food sufficient for themselves and their women and children, there is no longer *benefit* and *protection* to the whole ; the social compact is at an end ; and men have a right, thenceforward, to act agreeably to the laws of nature. If, in process of time, the land get into the hands of a comparatively small part of the people, and if the proprietors were to prevent, by making parks, or in any other way, a great part of the land from being cultivated, would they have a right to say to the rest of the people, you shall *breed no more*, if you do, *nature* has doomed you to starvation? Would they have a right to say, "We leave you to the *punishment of nature*?" If they were fools enough to do this the rest of the people would, doubtless, snap them at their word, and say, "Very well, then ; *nature* bids us live and love, and have children, and get food for them from the land : here is a pretty park, I'll have a bit here ; you take a bit there Jack ;" and so on. What! say the proprietors. would you take our *property*? No : but, if you will neither give us some of the fruits without our labour, nor give us some of them for our labour, we will use some of the land, for starved we will not be. "Why do you *love* and *have children* then? Because nature impels us to it, and because our right to gratify the passion of love was never given up either expressly or tacitly.

But there are the *helpless* ; there are those who are *infirm* ; there are babies and aged and insane persons. Are the proprietors to support them? To be sure they are ; else what *benefit*, what *protection*, do these receive from the Social Compact? If these are to be refused protection, why is the feeble and infirm rich man to be protected in his property, or in any other way? Before the Social Compact existed, there were no sufferers from *helplessness*. The possession of every thing being in common, every man was able, by extraordinary exertion, to provide for his helpless kindred and friends by the means of those exertions. He used more than ordinary industry ; he dug and sowed more than ordinary ; all the means which nature gave were at his command according to his skill and strength. And, when

he agreed to allow of proprietorship, he understood, of course, that the helpless were, in case of need, to be protected and fed by the proprietors. Hence the *Poor*, by which we ought always to mean the *helpless* only, have a right founded in the law of nature, and necessarily recognized by the compact of every society of men. Take away this right ; deny its existence ; and then see to what a state you reduce the feeble shadow of a man, who calls himself a land-owner. The constables and all the whole *posse* of the county are to be called forth to protect *him*. The able and hearty labourer is to be *compelled* to fight for this frail creature ; but if the father of this labourer become *helpless*, this father is to be handed over to the *punishment of nature* ; though nature would enable the son to provide most amply for the father, if there were not laws to restrain the son from using for the supply of the father that same strength which he is compelled to use in the defence of the feeble proprietor ! Oh, no ! Mr. Parson ! If we are to be left to the *punishment of nature*, leave us also to be *rewarded* by nature. Leave us to the honest dame all through the piece : she is very impartial in rewards as well as in her punishments : let us have the latter, and we will take the former with all our hearts. Their Boroughmongerships were extremely angry with the SPENCEANS for their talking about a common partnership in the land ; but the Spenceans have as much right as you to propose to recur to a state of nature ; yet *you* have not yet been *dungeoned*.

By this time the Hampshire Parsons, who are at the bottom of all projects brought forward by STURGES BOURNE, who is the Chairman of their Quarter Sessions, may, though they are as stupid as they are malignant, begin to perceive, that you might as well have left the *law of nature* alone. Let us next see how the case stands according to the *law of the land*, which, I fancy, you and Sturges and his sable crew will find, awards some *rights to the Poor*.

To suppose such a thing possible as a Society, in which men, who are able and willing to work, cannot support their families, and ought, with a great part of the women, to be *compelled* to lead a life of celibacy, for fear of having children to be starved ; to suppose such a thing possible is monstrous. But, if there should be such a Society, every one will say, that it ought instantly to be dissolved ; be-

cause a state of nature would be far preferable to it. However, the *laws of England* say, that no person shall be without a sufficiency of food and raiment; and, as we shall see, this part of our law is no more than a recognition of those principles of the social compact, of which I have just been speaking.

The lands of England, like those of any other country, were, at one time, and before society was formed, the common property of all the people in England. *Proprietorship* in individuals arose as I have above stated; 'till, at last, all the land was appropriated. But, so far (when society came to be formed completely) was the proprietorship of individuals regarded as *absolute*, that it was made a thing wholly dependent on the sovereign power of the nation. The sovereign power (which with us, is in a king as chief of the nation) was regarded as *the proprietor of all the land*: as the *lord* of it all. And, at this very hour, there is not an inch of land in the kingdom, to which any man has any *title*, which title does not acknowledge that the land is *held under the king*. There are lands held under Lords of Manors; but, then these Lords of Manors hold their manors *under the king*. So that, as the king has no Divine Right to rule, but rules and holds his office for the good of the people, and as he may, in case of violation of the laws, be set aside, and see another put in his place, he, as Lord Paramount of the land, is only the Chief of the nation; and, of course, all the lands are *held under the nation*.

Agreeably to this notion we daily see the lands of men taken away for public uses sorely against their will. We know that armies may be encamped on them, without liability to actions of trespass. We know that men are *paid*, indeed, for their lands taken away; but, they are *compelled* to give up the lands. Nay, their lands may be *ceded to foreign nations*. All which, and many other things that might be mentioned, prove, that the nation never gives up its paramount right to the lands.

Now, Parson Malthus, were there not some *conditions*, on which the lands of England were granted to, or made the property of, individual persons or families? Every one, who knows any thing at all of the laws of England, knows, that to every grant of land was attached the performance of some *service*, or *duty*, towards the *Sovereign*,

or chief of the nation. Sometimes the service was of a military nature ; sometimes of an agricultural nature ; sometimes of a pecuniary nature. Nay, the hold which the Sovereign still kept of the lands was so strong, that he was regarded, and he acted too, as guardian of all heirs and heiresses ; and, in default of regular heirs, took back the lands, no one being able to give his lands by *will*.

Thus the king, or sovereign, held an estate in the lands. From this estate the sovereign drew his means of carrying on the government, of making war, alliances, and so forth. These services have, for the greater part, been abolished by acts of Parliament ; and taxes have been raised to supply their place.

As to the *poor*, when the lands were at first granted to individuals, those individuals were the heads of *bands* or little *knots* of men. The leader, in time, called himself the *Lord*, and those under him his *vassals*, or *villeins*, or, under tenants, and almost slaves. The lords had the services of the vassals and villeins, and the vassals and villeins were protected and taken care of by the lords. So that, in this, the worst state of things (always excepting the *present*) the *poor* must, of course, have had a provision, they being in some sort the property of the lords.

When Christianity came to make considerable progress in England, and the lords of the lands became Christians, they caused churches and parsonage houses to be erected ; they were allowed to give lands to, and to settle tithes on, the Priest. And now mark me, Parson, for we are now coming to the point at which you will be pinched. These priests, you will observe, were to have *no wives*, and, of course, *no children*, to keep. Therefore, it would have been preposterous to give them the tenth part of the produce of the lands, seeing that besides, they disclaimed all worldly possessions. *What should they do* with this tenth part of the fruits of the earth ? The fact is, that the endowment was made upon the condition, that the priest should expend a fourth in his own way ; a fourth was to go to the bishop of the diocese ; a fourth was to maintain the edifice of the church ; and a fourth was to *maintain the poor*. For a long while there was no *general law* for the yielding of tithes ; but, when that charge was legally imposed on all the lands, the poor were, of course, every where entitled

to this fourth part. *Villeinage* being at this time greatly diminished, it was proper to provide a resource for the helpless other than that of the tables of the lords, and, therefore, this species of hospitality was transferred to the church, from which the Poor had a *right* to demand a maintenance and from which they received it, too, until the *robbery of the poor* (which has been called a *robbery of the church*) took place in the reign of king Henry the Eighth.

Before that time, the poor were, according to the *common law*, that is, the settled law of the whole kingdom, to be *sustained by those who received the tithes*, in the several parishes, or districts, which, indeed, all became parishes, except some particular spots, now called extra-parochial. That this was the *law of the land*, at and before the grand robbery of the poor in the time of Henry the wife-killer, and defender of the faith, is certain, not only from the *law-books*, but from the *statute-book*.

This is so important a matter, that, though I have, on a very late occasion, gone pretty fully into it, I will not be deterred, by the fear of a charge of repetition, from doing the same again.

When the regular clergy, or monks, or, more properly speaking, the persons, of whatever order, who lived in religious houses, or monasteries, came to be in high repute for their piety and for the efficacy of their prayers, in behalf of the souls of rich persons, they very soon persuaded those persons to give them a part, at least, of their property; and, some of these rich persons gave *advowsons* to the monasteries.

When churches were founded and endowed, the founder and endower became the *patron*, or *protector*, of it; and he had the right to *present* to the bishop the *priest*, who was to officiate in the church and receive its revenues. This right of presenting is called an *advowson*, and we know that *advowsons* are now becoming objects of *traffic*, and have been frequently *gambled for*.

Rich persons frequently gave to monasteries *advowsons* as well as other things; and then the monasteries sent a priest of their own to act as *parish priest*, who was allowed a small part for himself; but who was obliged to send away the far greater part of his revenues to the monastery. So that, out of this arose great distress to the poor, who thus lost *their*

share of the tithes. This gave rise to two acts of Parliament, one passed in the fifteenth year of the reign of Richard the Second, and one in the fourth year of Henry the Fourth, ordering, that in all such cases, a sufficiency of the revenues of the church should be retained in the parish for the sustenance of the poor.

Thus, then, clear as day-light stood the *legal* rights of the poor, previous to the grand robbery of them, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when, and in a few years afterwards, they were despoiled of the whole of their reserved resources the tithes were either *given to courtiers* or to *priests with wives*, and thus they have continued to this day.

But, still, there would be poor and helpless persons ; and as there was no such man as you at hand to recommend the "*punishment of nature*," provision was made for the poor in the way of *rate*, or *tax*. Hence arose the present system of poor-laws, which, for those unable to work, provide food and raiment, and, for those able to work, employment whereby they may obtain food and raiment. And BLACKSTONE, in his enumeration of the *Rights of Persons*, has this right to be sustained in case of need, "*The law*," says he, "*not only regards life and member*, and protects every man in the *enjoyment* of them, but also furnishes him with everything *necessary for their support*. For there is no man so indigent, or wretched, but he may demand a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life from the more opulent part of the community, by means of the several statutes enacted for the relief of the poor; a humane provision, and *dictated by the principles of Society*," Surely it was dictated by those principles ; but the necessity of making it arose out of the *robbery of the poor* by Henry the Eighth's courtiers, and by Priests of the succeeding reigns, which Priests have from that day to this, chosen to have wives and families. According to the Law of the Land it is not *Larceny* nor *Robbery* where a person (not owing to his own fault) is *reduced to extreme necessity*, and *steals victuals merely to satisfy present hunger and to prevent starving* ; and, I have no hesitation in saying, that a Jury, who convicts a person, under such circumstances, are guilty of *perjury*. The law is just here ; for, if there be a state of society, which exposes persons to starvation, without any fault on their own part, such society is a monster in legisla-

tion ; it is worse than a state of nature, and ought to be dissolved. What ! A social compact formed for the purpose punishing persons (who have been guilty of no fault) for using the only means left within their power to preserve their lives ! A social compact, which does not recognize the right to live ! Oh, no ! you do not deny anybody a right to *live* : you only wish for a law to make them *live on grass or dirt*, if they marry after a certain day, or are the fruit of any marriage or of any cohabiting or carnal communication after that certain day ! That is *all* you want. *Only* that ! Those, who are alive now, whether married or single, may have a right to *live* : but all that marry, or that shall proceed from any marriage or any unlawful commerce, *after this time*, are to feed with the crows or the rabbits ! So that, at the end of about forty or fifty, or, at most eighty years, there shall be no persons entitled to *relief* ; and, that in a few years, the number of persons so entitled shall be very small.

Callous Parson, hardened Parson, I have proved, that the relief now given, and that ought to be more largely given, by the statute law, to the Poor, is their *right* ; that it came to supply the place of that relief which the law of the land gave them before the thing called the Reformation ; and that the law of the land only supplied, in this respect the place of the law of nature. I have traced the Rights of the Poor ; meaning the *helpless*, either from inability to labour or from inability to find labour ; I have traced their rights down from the origin of the Social Compact to the present day, and have shown, that men, when they originally gave up their right of possessing the land in common never gave up, either for themselves, or for future generations, the right of living, loving, and perpetuating their like. But, muddy-headed parson, while you deny the labouring classes these rights ; while you choose to consider them as having no claim *on society* for "the *smallest portion of food*." Oh ! impudent Parson ! Your wife and children have, I suppose ! But, to be cool, if possible. While you consider the labouring classes as having no claim *upon society* even for the *smallest portion of food* ; you do not say a word about the claims, the *many and great claims*, which society *has upon them* ! If a young man, a labourer, just one and twenty, were to hear your proposition ; if he were to hear you say, that, if he married, he should be left to the laws of nature,

and should have no claim on Society, even for the smallest portion of food, one may suppose that the *answer*, which he would give you, would be in somewhat the following words : “ Mr. Parson Malthus,

“ I have no objection to your proposition ; for, though I and my brother and our two sisters have a father and mother, who, owing to the taxes, have never been able to save any thing for old age, and though we may have large families of children, yet I am not at all afraid, that in consequence of this new regulation, we shall be able to do very well for the future. As we have not any claim upon society, when we are infirm or helpless, for even the smallest portion of food, it will certainly not be pretended, even by the Hampshire Parsons, with he of Botley at their head, that society has any claim upon us. We have been *born* here in England, to be sure ; but, as society was not to blame for our not remaining in our progenitors loins, so we are not to blame for coming into the world. Here we are, however ; and, as we now find, that we have no right to protection from society, we will set to work, and do the best we can for ourselves. The society has shaken us off ; and we will shake it off. You send us to the law of nature for food in our distress ; and we will avail ourselves of that law for our benefit. As to any other laws we know nothing of them.

“ We love good beer very much. And we will work for barley and make malt ; and we will grow hops ; and we will make our beer for three half-pence a pot. We will go to the sea side and rake up our salt, which will not cost us more than six-pence a bushel. We will get our tea, sugar, coffee and tobacco from American ships, for a tenth part of what they cost us now. We will get some wine and brandy from men, whom the society-people call smugglers. We will get some rushes and dip them into our fat, and make us candles. We will boil up our grease and steep our ashes, and make us soap. All these things, and many more that I can name, are perfectly agreeable to the law of nature, and are only forbidden by the laws of society, with which, in future, thank God, we are to have nothing to do ; and our savings, which will arise from this change, will be so great as to put us out of all danger of future want.

“ We shall soon have a little farm in the family ; and, though we may owe something for a while to the man who

may sell us the farm, it will soon be our *own*. No contributions from us. You, who will, perhaps be the parson of the parish, shall never put your head over our gate, nor poke your nose into our pig-stye. You may be useful to the *Society*, perhaps ; it may think it wise to keep you and your wife and children in idleness ; but *we* want nothing of you, and, therefore, we shall keep the tenth part of the crop to ourselves. If we should want a Priest, we will engage him and pay him for his work.

“ As to personal service, as soldiers or sailors, we shall not need to waste our time and strength and to hazard our lives in that way. We shall be always able to defend ourselves against any body that can be supposed likely to attack us. The safety of the society is nothing to us. There may be riots or rebellions or treasons or invasions by dozens for any thing that we need care. Your proposition frees us from all *duties* towards the society, since it frees the society from the *only duty* that it had to perform towards us. It is impossible for you to point out one single advantage that society ever offered us, save and except that of giving us food, in case we were wholly unable to earn it for ourselves. And the society having freed itself from that duty, we owe it no duty at all ; and no duty shall it have from us.”

Reply to him, Parson ! Reply to John Chopstick ! And yet John might have gone much further ; for, it will be denied by no man living except a parson, that if such an act of *outlawry* were passed against the labouring classes, the bonds of society would, as to them, be wholly broken. They would have a right to recur to the laws of nature, and to take every man of them, whatever lands and houses and goods he was able to take. The doctrine of *natural allegiance* is, that every man is bound to be faithful to the sovereign, to aid, assist, and obey him ; and *for what* ? Because every man receives *protection* from the sovereign ; and, that he contracts the obligation of allegiance *before he is born* ; because, he is *protected before he is born*. But, you, hardened and impudent Parson, are for passing a law to *cast him off before he is born*, and for leaving him “ to the *punishment of nature*.”

You see the labouring classes heavily *taxed* ; you see part of the money raised from them given to swarms of *lord and lady pensioners* ; you see the children and other

relations of the Boroughmongers supported in idleness out of the taxes; you see whole families of women and children upon the list of Splendid Paupers; you see every parish with its priest's wife and her litter of children, living on the tithes; you see millions of the people's money given away to French Emigrants, some laymen, and some Popish Clergy; you see hundreds of millions of taxes squandered on war for the restoration of the Bourbons, and a debt, whch never can be paid, contracted for the same purpose, and that of restoring the Pope and the Inquisition; and seeing all this, you who are a protestant priest, have the infamy to affect to believe, that the miseries of the nation, are occasioned by the *labouring classes*, and accordingly you propose to *punish them!*

If you had not been a shallow and muddle-headed man, you never could have supposed, that the increase of the paupers in England had been caused by the practice of affording parish relief, seeing that, at the end of *two hundred years* of that practice the poor-rates amounted to less than *three hundred thousand pounds a year*; that, at the end of another *eighty years*, they amounted to *two millions and a quarter*; and that, at the end of the last twenty years before you wrote, they amounted to about *five and a half millions* a year. Seeing that such were the facts communicated to you by authentic records, any one but a mud-headed parson, or a perverse knave, would have looked about him for causes of the increase other than the practice of giving parish relief. When any rational and sincere man had seen, that this practice of giving relief had in the first two hundred years, not debased the people and made them improvident; when he had seen, that, during the last hundred, while the increase of taxes had been gradual, the increase of paupers had been gradual, till the enormous taxes began to be raised; and when he had seen that the last twenty years had been so very fruitful in producing paupers; he would soon have looked out for the real causes in operation during those several intervals. But, to have stated these causes would not have pleased the Boroughmongers, who had imposed the taxes, and who had livings to give to prostituted priests; and therefore you pitched upon the *labouring classes*. They were to be *punished* for the rapacity and waste of those who had tyrannized over them, and brought them to misery. The cause of the

increase of paupers has been *taxation, in co-operation with a false money*. But, as this has been proved so many times, I will not now prove it again. Amongst the labouring classes there wants no more proofs of this kind. *They* now know the real causes of their misery and slavery.

As to your notion of *danger* from an increase of the population of the kingdom, it is too absurd to merit serious remark ; seeing that, at the end of a thousand years of the kingly government, there remain *six or seven acres of land* to every man, every woman, and every child ! However in order to expose the follies and falsehoods of the Boroughmongers as to this matter, I will here make a remark or two on it. These tyrants, caused what they called an *enumeration* to be taken in 1801, and another in 1811. The tyrants wanted to cause it to be believed, that the people had *increased in number under their sway*. This would have been no *proof* of an absence of tyranny to be sure ; but, at any rate, it would have been a proof that the number of their slaves had augmented. They were extremely eager to establish this proof ; and to work they went, and, at last, put forth the population return of 1801, which made the total population of *England alone* amount to 8,331,434. Now, mind, Parson. In 1811 they caused another enumeration to be taken, when they made the population of *England alone* amount to 9,538,827, Bravo ? Impudent mountebanks ! Here is *more* than a *seventh* of increase in ten years ! So that, at this rate of going on, the population of *England alone* will in 1851 (only 32 years from this time) amount to 16,292,527 ; and, at the close of this present century, if their *paternal sway* should continue to that time, the population of *England alone* will amount to 27,891,009. Oh ! monstrous liars ! And, this is not all ; the increase must be much greater than this : for, from 1801 to 1811, were ten years of most bloody war, when not only many men where killed, but when *two hundred thousand* of the men, and those of the most efficient of papas were always *out of the country* either on ship board or in foreign lands ! Impudent liars ! The Boroughmonger sway began in 1688 ; and, if the population have gone on increasing only since that time, the population at that time could not have exceeded 2,000,000 ! Talk of "our Creator," indeed ! The borough-mongers are the most active creators that this world ever heard of. The second return is made very nicely to keep pace, in

most of its parts with the first. The *houses*, *families*; all increase in very *exact* proportion. But there is one difference in the mode of making up the *lie*, which is worthy of attention, and which blows up the whole mass of cheatery. In the first return the persons were divided into three classes as to *occupations*, as follows :

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Persons employed in Agriculture.....                        | 1,524,227.  |
| 2. Persons employed in trade, handicraft, and manufacture..... | 1,789,531.  |
|  | <hr/>       |
|  | 3,313,758.. |

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 3. All other Persons..... | 5,017,434. |
|                           | <hr/>      |

This was a damning fact for the Boroughmongering system ! Here were almost *two idlers* for every *one working man* ! No wonder that the *labouring classes* were *oppressed* ! No wonder that they were *starving* ! I. in my Register, very often observed upon this *fact*. Therefore, when the *second* return came to be made out, care was taken to *suppress this fact*, and yet to preserve an appearance of fairness. The classes, as to *occupation*, were now stated in *families*, and not in *persons* as before.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Families employed in Agriculture .....                        | 697,353.    |
| 2. Families employed in trade, handicraft, and manufacture ..... | 923,588.    |
|  | <hr/>       |
|  | 1,620,941.. |

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| 3. All other families..... | 391,450. |
|                            | <hr/>    |

This is a pretty change in the space of ten years ! To be sure the families of idlers are the *most numerous*; but what a monstrous difference is here ! They must amount upon *an average* to nearly 20 persons in a family, while the labourers, journeymen, farmers, and tradespeople, amount to little more than *two* in a family including *lodgers*; so that there could have been no children at all amongst these labouring classes ! Take heart Parson, ! There can be no fear, then, of *their* overstocking the land ! Oh, foolish Parson ! Oh, lying Boroughmongers !

The returns were *ordered* by *Boroughmongers* and *executed* by *Parsons*; and, of course, no truth could be expected

to be found in them ; but the falsehood might have been *better disguised*. This band, or, rather, two bands of liars, should have remembered the old rule : "when you have told a lie upon any subject, *never speak on the same subject again*."—In 1801, there were 3,313,758 persons of the labouring classes : and as the increase upon the whole population was, in 1811 a *seventh*, these labouring classes would in 1811, contain 3,787,029 persons. But this last return states them in *families*, of which the return says that there were (in 1811) 1,620,941. So that, in 1811, there were, amongst the Labouring and Trading Classes, only *two and a third part of another*, to each family, *including lodgers* ; or, only *seven persons to three families* !

Now, Boroughmongers and Parsons, take your choice : was the first return a lie ; or was the second a lie ? Both. It has all been a lie from the begining to the end. It is a mere fabrication to delude, deceive, cajole and cheat the nation and the world ; and the money expended to propogate the cheat ought to be, every farthing of it, refunded by the cheaters, and given back to those Labouring Classes, from whence the greatest part of it was taken, and to whose detestation I now leave you, Parson Malthus, and your foolish and insolent performance.

WM. COBBETT

—  
Chester Castle, May 29th, 1840.

My Dear Walker,

I yesterday received your letter containing among other things, your reflections on the sentence and treatment of Mr. O'Connor, I did not get yours of the 17th, for which I was very sorry, as your communications afford me much pleasure in this abode of crime and sorrow ; and I do not blame you for sympathizing with those persecuted Victims of Whig misrule, but, I think it somewhat strange, that you should be so strangely moved on behalf of a man with whom, you never spent an hour in private in your Life. While many of your own class, your own playfellows and neighbours, nay those very persons with whom you have to spend a great portion of your life and time, and on whom depends your support, happiness and future prosperity, are as ill treated and indeed singularly worse so than Mr. O'Connor, one would have expected that a man like him, who was the acknow-

ledged leader of so many Thousands of brave patriots, would have set a bold and magnanimous example to his followers, and like the brave and fearless Emmett, go with a smile to the scaffold. But alas ! such worthless, shrinking cowardice, such dread of imaginary evils, surely, never pervaded the breast of any public man before. Did he not know that a jail was not a place of or for recreation, did he expect to have a suit of Rooms prepared, and liveried menials to wait upon him, really Friend Walker I blush for his inconsistencies. I was once on a journey and happened to arrive in Melton Mowbray on the eve of a great hunt ; I could not get lodgings at any price and as the sun had set, I was compelled to sleep in the workhouse, or remain in the street ; when I got there I was put amongst the Paupers, and because I complained to the Governor, who cried out, why the Devil did you not send word you was coming, and the best parlour should have been got ready for you ! and I think the authorities at York, might with Justice have said the same to fearless Fergus, who sinks beneath that pressure that any of your own order bear cheerfully. Remember what has been born, by Gerald, Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Carlisle, Frost, Williams and Jones, Lovett, Collins, and last though not least, the brave, intelligent, persecuted Victim of tyranny, the young, generous and gallant Vincent. I will not speak of the feelings of the worthy O'Brien, who is the equal of Fergus in any respect ; nor of the sufferings of the scores of undaunted souls who are now languishing in Prison. I will not say a word of my own state of mind and that of my Partner in adversity, and her struggles to maintain four small children, in my absence, but, I do think, that the Man, who was the public and undisguised advocate of equality, should not be the first to complain of its operation ; besides when he wrote the Letter which you say appeared in the Star, and which I have seen in the London Times, he had only been in a single day, and even in that Letter according to his own account he was offered by the Magistrates to be allowed a place for himself, which he refused ; he says he had broth and was allowed Tea instead of Skilly, oh my dear Walker, there is no broth here ! nothing but DRY Potatoes and Salt for dinner *every day* and, as for Tea, why does the Fellow want Champagne, or Turtle soup, really I am surprised at such weakness, had he been in a month, I should

not have been at all astonished to hear his complaints, but he did not give time to any one of the Authorities to make such regulations as would be desirable. He says he has a flock bed, we have no such luxury here, but we have plenty of straw, for which we are very thankful. Was he not always telling us there ought not to be one law for the Rich and another for the Poor ; yet in the face of all these declarations he is one of the first to raise his voice against the principle as soon as his own theories are reduced to practice. He is dissatisfied too with his Iron Bedstead, we have all of us Iron Bedsteads here, and we feel that no inconvenience, but the name sounds harshly, and therefore furnishes food for a grumbler ; and as for Chairs and Tables, why my dear fellow, I am now writing on a Flag and sitting on a Stone Bench and notwithstanding I can laugh at persecution, and bid defiance to my oppressors, feeling as I do that I am punished for my honest advocacy of a good cause. In the report of his defence too, before the Judges he eat his own words, he said he was never the advocate of what is termed physical force ; now this both you and I know to be a palpable barefaced falsehood. Had he not been the advocate of Physical Force it is more than probable that myself and many others who are now in jail, would have been at home following our ordinary callings, if he did not support the principle what did he mean when he said

“Oh for the Swords of Times of Old !

Oh for the Arms which bore them !

When Men were neither bought nor sold

And Tyrants crouched before them.”

I do not know if this be correct, as I have quoted from memory, but you understanding what I mean will recollect the following as one of his favourite arguments,

Then up with your green Banners rearing,

Go flesh every sword to the hilt ;

On our side is Justice and Erin,

On theirs is oppression and guilt.

And now my friend, where are all the glories fled that I with you once thought would encircle the Heads of our Countrymen, and what has become of that energy of mind that we expected would characterize the supporters of the Charter. As soon as one of their wealthy supporters gets into trouble, the nation is convulsed from John a Groats to the

Lands-end, to see justice done to the Respectable sufferers and the newspapers are filled with cries of unconstitutional doings, but if a worthy intelligent operative falls into the merciless jaws of the legal Lion, he is quickly swallowed and forgotten, and although his expiring yell may be heard for a time, every ear is deaf to the shrillcries of Starvation arising from his perishing offspring, how long then my Friend will the masses continue to bow to the altar of mammon, and when will they standing erect in the Majesty of Manhood, proclaim that honesty alone shall be embraced, and supported, by the protecting arms of Society : and wealth cease to be the only criterion by which the merits of our citizens are calculated ; but I beg pardon my Friend. I have now to approach the important part of your letter, and also to make a remark on what is in the Newspapers ; I understand it has been reported that Mr. Stevens has the use of private apartments and pleasure grounds to walk in, with the constant Society of his family, and Visitors every Friday ; now sir you know I differ from Mr. Stevens in regard to Politics, and you know too that no Man has borne more abuse than I have for pointing out what I considered his delinquencies, and yet he is a Man who as a Fellow Prisoner will ever be endeared to me, and hence I cannot sit passively by and hear him, or indeed any other one needlessly vilified, even by petition in the very teeth of the legislature, had the Petitioners called all their Wits together, to aid them in counteracting the effect of our application (by Petition) through Mr. Warburton, (which I dare say you heard of) to ministers to get our troubles alleviated, they could not have set to work in a more effectual manner, than by the course they have taken They have said in their Petition that Mr. Stevens has private apartments why so he has a cell for himself, the same as I have, in the same ward, and he is accomodated too with an Iron Bedstead and a Straw Bed ; of which I never heard him complain. There is a Cell originally intended for the Condemned or Solitary Prisoners, and this is allowed as a Public visiting Room, in which Chartists and others see their Friends, and when it is unoccupied ; then Mr. Stevens has the use of it to write in, or eat his meat, and I have no doubt that Mr. O. C. will be allowed some simalar indulgence, but he surely could not expect to have a wing added to York Castle for his special

reception. When first Mr. S. came in, all the Chartists here have seen him eat his Skilly with all imaginable *Sang Froid*, and as for pleasure grounds why the idea makes me laugh ; our pleasure ground is the common yard, and he has no other. And as for lots of visitors every Friday, it is all humbug, none is allowed but our own families once a week. Other Friends commonly come the second Friday in every month, my dear Walker no point has been stretched, no rule has been violated in favour of Mr. S. I assure you ; Mc. Dowall enjoys all and every privilege that Mr. S. does, nothing has been wrong from the Magistrates by importunity and all remains the same now as before the last assizes, although eight more were added to our number, we have little indeed to complain of except the dietary which is both scarce and coarse, and Mr. Stevens enjoys nothing but what the printed Rules allow, to all, as well as him, and I have no doubt in due time the worthy citizens of York, who have been honoured with a seat on the Magisterial bench will treat Mr. O. C. as becomes a Gentleman. There is one thing more I wish to mention and that is, that while they were petitioning for Mr. O. C. why did they not include all Political Prisoners as we did in ours—you will see by our Petition, that we have taken a view of all, not thinking it proper to legislate for a class—and now my dear Samuel, I trust you will give the foregoing observations your best attention—what I have stated are facts that cannot be denied, and I expect therefore that you will not consider I am biased by any Persons or influenced, by any improper motive. I cannot take one view of the thing to day and another to morrow—I ever considered that pure democracy was the only System of Government worth seeking to support and I cannot imagine why preference ought to be given to any man any more than another when they are all working in the same cause, except according to his usefulness.

I thank you for the trouble you have been at by getting those verses printed, and I am sorry they have not paid you better but I hope you will be more successful with the next, I have not seen one yet, as none came in Dukes parcel, but if Elijah comes at Whitsuntide please to send a Copy by him—I am very sorry to hear of a turn-out being talked about in Ashton, I do not think it will be productive of any good at the present time—please to present my respects to

our Friends in the City, both male and female and what ever becomes of Fergus or the little Corporal I shall ever remain your sincere and Democratic Friend.

T. HIGGINS.

P. S. I beg leave to remark too that while the papers are teeming with subscriptions, for Frost and his Wife, the York Victims Lovett and Collins, Vincent, O'Brien, Barnsley Men, &c. &c, No notice has been taken of the Chester Prisoners except Mc. Dowall, and what has been supplied to them, has been by their immediate friends, for which they return many thanks. You are at liberty to publish this in the Star, or any other way you may think proper,

I remain yours sincerely,

T. HIGGINS.

# STEPHENS'

# MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1840.

## THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AND THE NEW POOR LAW, OR THE WHIGS AND TORIES AND THEIR CONDUCT TOWARDS THE LABORING CLASSES.

Infidels have often asserted and too frequently with good reason, "that Christianity exists in this country only in name," and, indeed, when we look around and see how the name of Christianity is profaned by the clergy and laity alike, and how all alike setting at nought the Divine precepts of Jesus, the meek, the holy, and loving, indulge in that soul-destroying passion, the love of gain, we are almost compelled however unwilling, to agree with them in the melancholy and disagreeable truth.

The church of God is established upon earth that evil men may be restrained, from wrong doing, in this country it existed in the person of the Holy Catholic church for ages, and it ceased not to exist under that name, and form so long as its ministers performed the duties of their ministry faithfully and thoroughly; but, when they forsook God, in neglecting to attend to the wants of the widow and fatherless, and also took to worshipping the devil, by acquiring property, and not freely dispensing it to the needy; then God forsook that church, and great was the tribulation in this land, in consequence: unrighteousness has prevailed, and that for centuries.

The church which followed that called the Catholic, whose supreme head upon earth was the Pope, we know to have been called The *Reformed* Church, or the Church of England, whose supreme head is the King or Queen. This church began its career of reformation by abandoning the poor to their own resources, and by its ministers not being men of God, but men seeking after the things of this world rather than those of the world to come. These

ministers began the reformation by taking to themselves wives, and begetting families rather than devoting themselves as humble ministrants to the wants of the wretched and needy. Various were the laws to root the poor out of the land, in defiance of God's word, which tells us, "The poor shall not cease from out of the land." Whippings, brandings, ears were cut off from the wretched beggar, and at length even hanging was had recourse to, in the mild reign of that famous Protestant, Queen Bess. But all would not do, the poor still existed, and when they found themselves so ill-used, they ceased to beg singly, and prowled about in bands stealing flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle, until the very end and purpose of civilized society was set at nought, and the lesson was taught the Godless high and mighty ones, that, he whose master-hand rules all would not suffer the poor to be set at nought without a heavy penalty being paid. So heavy became the penalty for not looking to the wants of the poor, that, in the forty-third year of Queen Elizabeth, the rich began to consider seriously about God's commands concerning the poor, and as the ministers of the reformed church would not attend to the poor, the laity were enjoined by an act of Parliament to do this, and the layman who held the office of churchwarden was, with one or two others who were called overseers, commanded to see that out of the riches of each parish the poor of each parish should be fed, and if any parish was incapable of feeding and providing amply for the wants of its own poor, the churchwarden and overseers were authorised to call upon the next parishes to aid them; and in order to give the poor the means of easily obtaining parish aid, every one was able to gain a claim to the aid by birth, or short residence, or apprenticeship, or servitude.

Thus, this act gave the poor by law that, which is the principal use for a church upon earth, namely, a provision for the poor.

This provision was by finding the able-bodied employment, and giving them sufficient wages, and by providing the helpless and needy with food, clothing and lodgings; and that of good sort in plenty, and its recipients in perfect liberty.

The children of the devil could not allow so good a thing as this Godlike act, long to exist without impairing its use.

fulness in some shape or other, so ever since the 43d year of Elizabeth, we have upon record a multitude of nibblings at this famous act ; they began by making it more difficult to obtain settlements, and by punishing the poor for not staying at home. Various have been their modes of attack, but one of the most horrible and loathsome is that which commenced some 70 or 80 years ago, that of converting the buildings used as working places, into dwellings or rather aggregations of misery, helplessness, and disease ; this devilish practice has crept on until we have lived to see well nigh two millions of pounds sterling expended, not to provide for the poor, but to erect splendid prison-houses for those whose wants need sympathy and alleviation, not sternness and rough coercive imprisonment.

We have lived to see the much respected office of overseer sunk into nothingness, and the churchwarden severed from the charge of attending to the wants of the poor, and all this done by authority of Parliament, and assented to by the head of the reformed church as established by law ; worthy church, worthy head, thrice worthy of each other, oppress the needy, trample upon the poor, **THEY** are the lower orders, how dared **THEY** exist.

**PARSON**, aye Parson Malthus, well worthy of the reformed church, found out the poor bred too fast, and he it was who gave a strong fillip to the courage of the poor oppressing crew, by publishing propositions to sever from all benefit arising from parochial aid, all children born after a certain day : and farther, that marriage might be discouraged as much as possible he proposed, that after a certain day any couple that should marry should lose all claim to parochial aid.

Infidelity may well exist, Owenism may well be rampant, when a Parson of the Church of England could be suffered to put forth such infernal proposals as these without obtaining the censure of his bishop, and without being silenced.

Amongst the other infamous means of oppression we must not forget the select vestrymen, nor the infamous shutting out of the poor from their just share of power to protect themselves in public vestry meetings, by robbing them of their votes and giving them to the rich ; by the notorious Sturges Bourne's act, which gives a man one or

more votes up to six, accordingly as he may be rated to the assistance of the poor: thus, in the presence of Almighty God in the very buildings consecrated to his worship, in these reformed churches do the Church of England men desecrate God's house by the worshipping of mammon, every man giving more votes than his neighbour is, really offering up sacrifice to mammon, which is the impersonation of the devil.

In God's house all men are equal, yet, statute law has decreed that it shall not be so.

In our day great is the cry of Whig and of Tory, one says he is for the Whig, another for the Tory,—few have the wit to say, they are for doing good, independent of any party.

If we take a review of the acts of the two great parties in the State, we may sum them up after the following manner:—The Whig always clamouring about economy and liberty, is insidiously more extravagant in taxing the people and more directly the despoiler of their liberties than the Tory; yet, no wickedness was ever devised by the one party in which the other did not help heart and soul. Thus the New Poor Law, brought in by the Whig faction, was agreed to (save with a very few honourable exceptions,) by both parties, and is now worked by the parsons and laity of the two factions all over the country.

Thus, the labouring man who honestly strives for a living ought not to suffer any party to lead him astray, he should test all the acts and professions of each by the doctrines of God's Word, and abandoning all party names abide by those who labour in love and in kindness, to benefit the needy and helpless.

The Church of England having now severed every tie which bound the labouring classes to it, may now speedily expect God's just punishment upon it, and if its pluralist ministers, and its non-residents, its banking, trading, huckstering ministers do not put away the accursed thing from amongst them, we shall have no other task to perform for them and their church, than to record the decline, fall, and termination of the Church of England, as by law established.

Will nothing tend to open their eyes? Surely the immense and increasing numbers of Dissenters, ought to teach them that

the people are aware of their not performing the duties of Christian pastors: hence the emptiness of their churches, and the fullness of the places of worship of the Dissenters! But, that which God hath doomed no man can alter.

Let us fervently hope, that, Christian charity may abound amongst us; let us labour together to promote it, and then will come an end of new poor laws; then shall we see the horrible factory system ended; but, until God of his infinite mercy and goodness shall embue all hearts with his grace, to do this, all our labour will be fruitless. Let us therefore, humbly implore his aid, and rest assured in due season it will be given.

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## TO PARSON MALTHUS, ON THE POPULATION OF ENGLAND.

PARSON,

I ADDRESSED a letter to you, on this subject, in 1819. Since that time a *third* Population Return has been laid before Parliament. At that time very small was the chance of obtaining attention. The boroughmongers were yet gay. The consequences of the glorious war had not been so much felt as at present. I think, that, now, there is better chance of making some impression; and, at any rate, there is a *humbug* to be exposed; and, to expose it is a duty. The exposure will, at the least, serve to shew the people of other countries how those of this boasting country are cajoled and duped.

There is an opinion existing, that the people of these islands have, *of late years, greatly increased in number.* This is a *singular* thing upon the very face of it. *Why* should it be? There seems as Mr. GOODWIN says, "*no reason*" for such an opinion. But, it prevails and to appear to *doubt of the fact* is likely to excite wonder amongst the greater part of companies. Yet *why* should it be? *Why* should English people take, all at once, or, of late years, to breeding *more than formerly?* Why should they *die less* in proportion to the births? In short, *why* should they *increase in number?*

Never was such a thing suspected till you wrote your *book on population.* You found the boroughmongers greatly puzzled to account for the *increase of the paupers;* and you invented for their use this increase of population. It was plain enough the people had been made paupers by the rob-

beries committed on them by the means of paper-money; it was plain enough, that paper-money and taxes had produced the increase of paupers; but this was not a pleasant thing to tell the boroughmongers, to please whom there must be some cause found out that cast no blame upon them. Hence your book, to prove, that *men increase faster than the means of feeding them*, unless there be some "restraint" on them, as to their *marrying and breeding*. This was a grand discovery for the boroughmongers; and, it was still better, when you found out, that it was right to *check* this increase of population by *cutting off parish relief*! This was delightful. What an excellent parson, to make such a humane discovery for the boroughmongers!

Your assertions were these: *first*, that there is a principle which is continually at work to cause an increase of population; *second*, that it is necessary that this principle should be checked; *third*, that in England it has not been checked, but, on the contrary, encouraged by the giving of parish relief to the poor; *fourth*, that this encouragement was the cause of great evil to the country; *fifth*, that it caused the paupers to increase in number and the poor rates to increase in amount; *sixth*, that a law ought to be passed to prevent any relief being given to people who should marry after such a day, or to the children proceeding from any marriage taking place after such a day. Here, however I must take your own words: Those infamous words are these: "To this end I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring, that no *child* born from any marriage taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate *child* from two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance. After the public notice, which I have proposed, had been given, to the punishment of nature HE should be left; the punishment of severe want: all parish assistance should be rigidly denied him. HE should be taught that the laws of nature had doomed him and *his family* to starve; that HE had no claim on society for the smallest portion of food; that if HE and *his family* were saved from suffering the utmost extremities of hunger, he would owe it to the pity of some kind benefactor, to whom HE ought to be bound by the strongest ties of gratitude."

I will not stop here to notice the unintelligible language

of this proposition. I shall remark upon that, perhaps, by-and-by. What I have here to do is, to shew the falsehood, of the assertions and the baseness of the propositions founded on those assertions. Mr. GOODWIN gives you and your patrons credit for humanity of motive. I give you no such credit. Why am I to believe that your motives are not bad when I find your doctrines false and your recommendations unjust and cruel?

The foundation of this mass of falsehood and cruelty is the assertion that the population of England has, of late years, *greatly increased*. I deny this fact; and I am sure you can produce nothing in proof as it, except those *Population Returns*, for the full value of which (when we have ascertained the value), I am quite willing to give you credit. Having asserted this increase of population, you next say, the population naturally will increase if not checked. Instead of being checked in England, it has been increased by poor-rates. Let us, therefore put an end to poor rates: and then comes the diabolical proposition above quoted.

I shall talk to you by-and-by about the *Law of Nature*! but first let us pursue this question of the increase of population. You say that this population is increased by the poor-rates. Can you tell me how it happens that it has not gone on increasing from the same cause, ever since the poor rates began to exist? Can you tell me that? Can you tell me why the poor rates should have begun to produce this effect only of late years? You can tell me no such a thing. You can give no reason why the increase should not have been going on from the time that the poor rates were first enacted. You can give no reason, why this increase should not have been regularly going on. In short, if it have been going on of late years, and going on from this cause, it must have *always* been going on: for before the poor rates were enacted, indigent persons were relieved by the parish priests and by the convents. If, therefore, to relieve the indigent be to cause an increase of population in the country, this increase must have been going on in England for upwards of seven hundred years! Now, what a pretty swarm, if your principle and if the Population Returns, if these returns and if your principle were worth a straw, what a pretty swarm we should be at this moment! The poor laws, themselves, have been going on upwards of two hundred years; and if, during that

time, your principle has been at work producing an increase, such as the Returns tell us has been produced during the last twenty years, there could not have been existing in all England above a *hundred or two pairs of breeders*, in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth ! The last Population Return must have fixed the thing in the mind of every man not resolved to be a dupe ; but of this I shall have to say a great deal more by-and-by.

I before asked why there should be all of a sudden, such an increase of the English people. I do not ask what is the good it, or what is the bad of it ; but I here ask simply why it should be. There is no reason to be given for it, which will not equally well apply to every nation of Europe. We may as well pretend that the weather has grown better of late years, in England ; but not in other countries of Europe. We may as well pretend this, as to pretend that your principle of population has been at work here, while it has not been at work amongst the continental nations. Upon the face of the thing, then, we should say, *this cannot be true*. There cannot have been an increase of people in all these countries at one and the same time. They have been engaged in wars for thirty years past, and so have we. What in God's name should cause us all to have increased in numbers, during all these wars ! What proof have we of any such increase ? All the appearances are against such a presumption. Either the churches of this country were built for the purpose of standing empty ; or, at least, those who built them, were most prodigal of their labour and their money ; either this was the case ; or this country was, at one time, much more populous, throughout the far greater part of it, than it now is.

No doubt Lancashire, part of Yorkshire, and some other parts, are more populous than they formerly were. No doubt this is the case with regard to the four counties joining up to the WEN. The last war drew together great swarms round the sea-ports. But, as to the *kingdom in general*, where are the marks of an increasing population ? In a Return laid before Parliament in 1818, containing an account of the benefices and population, and also an account of the state of the churches and chapels. In this Return we find several churches, several scores and hundreds of good fat benefices, where there is now, in some places, scarcely any population at all.

And a great number of churches and of good fat livings, where the whole of the population, according to the Population Return, does not amount to *two hundred persons*. In many cases, the population does not amount to thirty. I have my eye now upon five parishes in Dorsetshire. They all stand following each other upon the list. *Almer*, population 160; *St. Andrew in Milbourne*, population 200; *Ashmore*, population 153; *Askerwell*, 197; *Athelhampton with Burlestone*, 30; *Bittiscombe*, 70; each of these places has a church, each of them is a benefice. *Athelhampton with Burlestone*, which contains only 30 people observe, has both a church and a chapel. So that, here are 810 people all taken together, and they have amongst them six churches and a chapel; that is to say, one place of worship for every 115 persons; and, of course, for about every forty or fifty grown up persons. Now, is it to be believed, Parson, that these churches were built for the use of a population like this? Is it to be believed that the churches were built solely for the purpose of finding out an easy life for the parsons that were to be put into them? It appears that, according to their own confession, the livings of four of these parishes bring 600 pounds a-year. The worth of the two others is not mentioned; and they are not mentioned expressly because they are worth more than 150 pounds a-year each. Give these two living 500 pounds a-year each, and then you have 1600 pounds a year given to parsons to take care of the souls of 810 men, women, and children. It is impossible to believe that such a thing ever was intended. No: these churches were built because there was a population that demanded churches. In the next column of the Return, there are the following parishes: *Buckland Riper*, population 61; *Catherston*, 20; *Charborough*, 26; *Chilborough West*, 44; *Chilcomb*, 22; *Compton Abbas*, 40; *Farnham*, 56; *Hammoon*, 40; *Hinton Paver*, 26. now it is curious enough that these are all rectorial parishes, and that three of them are very large livings. Here are nine parishes and nine parish churches for the sake of taking care of the souls of three hundred and thirty-five men, women and children; so that there are only thirty-seven souls and a fraction to one parson. Just stepping into the next county, Wilts, we find the parish of *Bremhill* with a population of 16; *Calloes*, 20; *Colstone*, 29; *Chalfield Magna*, 16; *Draycot Foliot*, 38; *Foxley*, 45.

*Langford Paver*, 20 ; *Pertwood*, 20, *Rollstone*, 39 ; *Sharn-cut*, 8. Here ten parishes all rectorial livings, except Rollstone, four of them are livings which according to the Return, yield about 400 pounds a-year, amongst them. But the other six are large livings. Let me explain this matter. The Return was to specify the value of no living that was ABOVE 150 pounds a-year ! Why not ? Why not specify the worth of those *above* as well as those *below* 150 pounds a-year ? Why the reason was, to be sure, to keep from the knowledge of the Public, the value of these rich livings.

To proceed then, here are ten livings worth in all probability, more than four thousand pounds a year, to take care of the souls of 152 persons, amounting to about sixteen pounds per soul, per annum. It is monstrous to suppose that these parishes were founded and these churches built, without twenty times the population. In one of the parishes, *Draycot Foliot*, were the living is a large living, too, there is no church at all. The people if they go to church, go somewhere else, and the parson still gets the money. In numerous instances there are no churches at all ; but though the church is gone, and the people too, the fat living remains.

It is impossible to look at these things, and not to see that one part of the nation has been depopulated to increase the population of another part. I have given the list of about twenty parishes here, which have become nearly depopulated. I could give a list of about four thousand parishes in England and Wales, for the present population of which, every man must be convinced that a church would never have been built. Churches, indeed, could not have been built by a population not exceeding that of the present day. How were 70 or 80 or 100 persons to build a church ; one-half of them being females, to begin with, and two-thirds of the other half, being babies, boys or old men. How were churches to be built by a population like this ? It is therefore, manifest, that the agricultural population of the country has greatly decreased: There would have been no sense in building the churches ; to have built them would have been downright brutal folly, if the population had not been beyond all measure greater than it is now, in the villages throughout the greater part of the country.

When people see new houses, they are apt to think, that

they see signs of increase; and this they certainly do see, where they see the *boundaries* of towns and cities extend themselves; where they see whole towns rising up here and there as round this WEN. But, to see new houses building in towns and villages is no sign of increase, any more than it is to see wheat stacks building in a farm yard. It is true, these are new stacks; but they only come to replace others that are just taken away. Houses are continually wearing out; and if, upon going through a town or a village, you do not see one new house; one house built this very year; one of these for every forty houses that the town or village contains; you may set down that town or village as being in a *state of decay*. In mere villages were the houses are weak, there ought to be *one new one out of every twenty*; for these frail houses do not last, upon an average, above twenty years.

Let any man take these observations for his guide; let him go through the country towns and villages; particularly those to the westward, once so populous. Let him take notice of the tumbling down houses; of the totally dismantled small farm houses. Let him look at the little barns, and yards that where formerly homesteads, and that are now become mere cattle sheds. Let him look at that which was the farm house, but which is now become the miserable abode of two or three labourers and their families, who are perishing with hunger, cold and nakedness, beneath that roof where ease and happiness dwelt, until the accursed paper-money system laid its fangs upon the country. All these small farm houses have disappeared; and yet the villages have grown smaller and smaller. The accursed paper-money has drawn the wretched people into crowded masses. All the laws have had the same tendency. That mixture of agricultural with manufacturing pursuits, which was so favourable to the health and morals of the people and to their ease and comfort, at the same time; this is gone from the villages and country towns; and the population is gone along with it; and gone, too, to become a sort of slaves, regularly drilled to their work, and kept at it very nearly literally under the lash.

Accordingly, there is scarcely a village, at a distance from fundholders, manufacturing rendezvous, watering-places, sea-ports, or barracks: there is scarcely a village

at a distance from all these, which contain a *fourth part* of the people that it formerly contained. I have mentioned above twenty parishes by name. In most of these parishes, two or three farmers have come and swallowed up farms, formerly occupied by probably fifty farmers. Nothing is more common than to see a man occupying land, which formed, not more than thirty, forty, or fifty years ago, *twenty farms*. Three, four, or five farms made into one, is a thing to be seen everywhere. And yet as I observed before, the population of the villages is decreased. In going through a village, in almost any part of the country, except where the funds or the manufacturing establishments have an influence, you are sure to see ten houses almost falling down, for every one that you see building. In numerous instances I found, in my rides during the last fall, houses quitted from danger of their falling down; and I very seldom found that any new house was building in the stead. I went into scarcely any agricultural village, where I did not see the old bricks and other rubbish of a house or two, that had recently stood upon the spot where the rubbish now was. On the outskirts of almost all the villages, you find still remaining, *small enclosures of land*, each of which has manifestly had its house formerly. They are generally in pasture at this time; but if you look attentively at the ground, you will see unevenesses which shew you that here are the relics of the foundations of houses; while if you look at the fences you will see gooseberry, currant or raspberry-bushes, making their appearance here and there. In the middle of such little plots of ground, you frequently see old pear trees or apple trees, or the stumps of them remaining. All these are so many proofs of a greatly diminished, and of still diminishing population.

It is possible that as much human sustenance may be produced in these agricultural parishes as there used to be, though the number of hands may be much smaller. It is very well known, that horses and tackle now do, in many a case, what was formerly done by the hands of man. But, that there was more land in cultivation formerly than there is now nobody can doubt. They produce to us the long list of enclosure bills; but it is curious enough that they never tell us, that the far greater part of this land was cultivated formerly, without any enclosure bill at all. If the Parliament

would lay out a few thousand pounds of our money, in order to ascertain how many hundreds of thousands of acres of land was in cultivation before the Revolution, more than is in cultivation now, I should not grudge that money, as I do the money laid out in Population Returns. However the great proof; the *undeniable* proof, of depopulation, throughout a considerable part of the kingdom, is this fact; that there are nearly a third part of the whole of the churches, which, if the population were the same, when the churches were built that it is now, those churches were built by crazy people. They were built without any reason for building them. Many of them stand within a mile of each other; and it frequently happens, that the two parishes do not now contain people enough, allowing for sick people and little children, and for those that must stay at home to take care of the house or of the cattle: it frequently happens that the two parishes do not, if you make these allowances, contain people enough to fill one pew! It is monstrous, then, to suppose that these parishes have not, in a great measure, been depopulated. How are we to believe that the people could have built churches unless there had been numbers sufficient to fill them? It is not in one, two or three, but in *hundreds of instances*, that the churches are now *wholly gone*; and the people are left to straggle to the next parish church, while the parson however, takes care to sack the amount of the benefice, notwithstanding the notorious fact, that when tithes were founded, a fourth part of them was allotted to the building, the repairing and the beautifying the churches. All this seems now to be forgotten. The churches are in many cases, suffered to tumble down; the parson continues to pocket the amount of the tithes; and the paternal government brags of the increase of its family.

The *size*, the size of the Churches; this alone would be enough to convince any man of sound judgement, that there has been a prodigious decrease in the popnlation of a great part of the Kingdom. The curious Return of which I have spoken above, professes to have in view to ascertain *how many people the several churches will hold*. So that, one naturally is inclined to look with a good deal of curiosity to what is said upon this subject, in cases where the population is reduced to a mere nothing. Let us take a little list here. The parish of BREMHILLHAM contains

sixteen persons altogether. The parish is a rectory. The parson is required to write down, "number of persons they can contain;" that is to say, number of persons, the churches can contain. Now, this parson of BREMHILLHAM, states in his answer, that his church will contain "*the population*;" that is to say, his church is capable of holding *sixteen persons*, supposing the whole of the people of the parish to be at church at one time. Now, 16 grown up men can stand in a space *four feet square*. We know that six can sit in a stage coach; and yet this parson tells us, that his church, "can contain the population," of his parish.— What, then, is there a *double meaning* here? Is there a little bit of the Jesuit played off among us sincere Protestants? The church *can* contain the population; but the pious pastor does not *say* that it can contain *no more*! But, this was not the question: the question was, *what number of persons they can contain*; that is to say, how many persons can your church contain? This is the amount of the question; and, notwithstanding this, it is stated, in this Return, that the church can contain "*the population*," in the case of scores of parishes, where the population is *under forty*. Perhaps there is not a church in England, the porch of which would not hold twenty men. Certainly not one, the chancel of which would not hold a hundred men, standing upright; and, perhaps, there is not one that would not hold more than three hundred. We have seen above that there are *eight* people living in SHARNCUT, in the Return, the *rector* (for this is a rectorial living,) says that *his church can hold eight people*! And this he signs with his name; and it is sent by the bishop; and the bishop sends it to the King in council; and the King in council lays it before Parliament. So that, here is the Parliament informed, and here is the nation taxed to pay for the printing of the information, that there is a church at SHARNCUT in Wiltshire, that "*can contain*," eight living souls; a whole eight of them, at one and the same time. After this it must be a pretty beastly people to be guided by these Returns. The thing to remark with regard to this Return, is the cavalier-like impudence of it. It is manifest that the question was intended to get an account of what number each church would contain, when it was sufficiently filled. There was no sense in the question if this was not the object of it; and, yet, here is a man to take his pen and

write down the figure eight, against this question, and send it off to the bishop without any ceremony. In all probability his church would contain *several hundreds* of persons. I never yet saw a church that would not. It is very seldom, indeed, that the meanest and most miserable country church is less, in the clear than fifty feet long. Cut off a bit for a belfry and leave a piece for the communion table, and you have still a room thirty feet long, at least, and from fifteen to twenty feet wide. Two rows of people, sitting on benches up the middle of this room will make three score. There are about fifteen or sixteen pews generally in such a place. It must be a miserable hole that has not a gallery to contain a hundred. Add a few cross benches here and there. But, why need I make any such calculations, when it is notorious, that Methodist meeting houses, not a quarter part so big as the smallest church in the kingdom, contain two or three hundred persons each.

It is impossible, then, to believe anything in these Returns, if the facts stated make in favour of the parties. When they were compelled to state that the parish contained but *eight* people, and, in other cases, sixteen, twenty, thirty, forty, and so on. When they were putting down these numbers, it would have been awkward to say that the church was capable of containing *two or three hundred persons*; for, that would naturally lead the mind back, as my mind is now led back, to the question: *What were these churches built for?* Then I proceed to ask; What, in God's name were the tithes granted for, in cases like these? And, since the population is gone; since there are no souls to take care of; why are there benefices wherewith to maintain parsons? If our population be increasing too fast, why not check it amongst the breed of parsons? If the population be removed, so that the churches are not wanted in the places where they were built, and that churches are wanted in other places; if this be the case, *why tax the people* for the building of new churches? Why not take the amount of the tithes in those parishes where there are no churches now, or from which the population has departed, why not take the amount of these tithes, and expend them on the building of these new churches, and in finding parsons for these new churches? At CATESBY in Northamptonshire, there are a hundred and seventeen people; the living is a rich vicarage; but there is

neither church nor chapel. At STUTYBY in the same county, which is a rectorial living, which contains thirty-two people, there is neither church nor chapel. At HORNFIELD, and at MARTINSTHORB in Rutlandshire, there is neither church nor chapel. The former parish contains twenty-seven people, and the latter parish contains *five* people. But the livings are worth something. According to the confession of the parson himself the care of the five souls yields him sixty-six pounds a-year! That is to say, twelve pound, ten shillings per annum per soul! The parish of HASLEBURY in Wiltshire has written against it, as follows : "A rectory : a very small parish, "two or three families. No church" or chapel : the parishioners go "to Box." This Box is an adjoining parish. But it is clear that they must go to the devil, if they had nothing for it but their own church. "*A very small parish,*" the parson says, but he does not say very small tithes. The amount of the tithes is *left blank*. That amount is, therefore, confessed to be *above a hundred and fifty pounds a-year*; this is confessed by the sum being left blank; and it may be six or seven hundreds a-year, and very probably is.

Here, then, we have a pretty scene! Parishes in great numbers, without any churches at all, while the people are taxed to build new churches elsewhere; but while these rectors and vicars still retain all the tithes in the places where they have suffered the churches to tumble down. Nay, while this has been going on; while the churches have been tumbling down, and the parsons receiving the tithes at the same time; while two or three livings have been suffered to be possessed by one and the same parson, a hundred thousand pounds a-year have been voted out of the public money, *for the relief of the poor parsons of this church!* And never have you, PARSON MALTHUS, proposed to check the breeding of these parsons, or to *leave them* to the law of nature.

To return, for a moment, to the churches, Mr. WHITE, in his account of SELBORNE, observes, that the population of the parish must have been much greater formerly than it was when he wrote, because, says he, the church is now so much larger than is necessary to hold the parishioners. I should stop here to express my acknowledgments to two gentlemen who have had the great goodness to send me a copy, each of them, of Mr. WHITE's book, which I have read with great

attention, and in which I have found a great deal of entertainment, Mr. WHITE wrote in the year 1788 or thereabouts. He says that the parish must have been much more populous than it then was, seeing that the church was *much too large for the number of inhabitants*. He says, also, that the burying-ground was once larger than it is, or, rather, than it was when he wrote. He gives an account of six or seven mills having been, where there was no mill at all, at the time when he wrote. It is curious enough, that, in the Return, of which I have spoken above, which was sent by the bishops to the King in Council, and by the King in Council to the Parliament; in this Return it is stated, that the parish of SELBORNE contains 770 persons; and that the church will contain, 560 persons! This is a droll affair! Here this half-depopulated village has not got a church big enough to hold its people; though, in 1788, Mr. WHITE, the vicar of the parish, said that the church was a great deal too big. Perhaps, indeed, those who made out this Return, might, if you were to put it home to them, say that they meant the church would contain the 560 persons; but that they did not mean that it was not big enough for a parish of 770 persons, seeing that not one-half of the people are ever at church at one and the same time. However, we have, in this case, the *dimensions of the church*, which Mr. WHITE says, leaving out the chancel, is fifty-four feet long and forty seven feet wide. He says there are three aisles, which, I suppose, are about each forty feet long. A double row seated up these aisles would hold about 240 persons. The area of the church is 2538 square feet. So that, supposing there to be neither gallery nor bench of any sort, here are three square feet and a quarter upon the pavement for every soul in the parish. And yet this Return says that the church will hold 560 people; and if the Return be not perfectly Jesuitical, it must mean that the church will hold no more than 560. Thus, then, we have seen what these Returns are worth; that is to say, we have seen, that they are never to be relied upon in any case, except where they tell against the wishes of the parties who make them.

The size of the churches is a thing of great consequence. We find them, throughout the agricultural part of the country, to be out of all reason too large. I have shown that there are many hundreds of parishes, the whole population of

each of which, might be placed in the *porches* of the church. I have given instances of several parishes, the present population of each of which might be put into a stage coach. I have given instances, or, at least, have stated that there are hundreds and hundreds of parishes, the present population of each of which do not amount to a hundred; and that there are several thousands of parishes, the present population of which does not amount to two hundred! There were about ten thousand churches in England; and, at this very moment, the whole of the present population could, except in those parts where men have been drawn together by the paper-money, be not only accommodated with these churches; but, with the help of a little straw in each parish, actually hidden under the roofs of these churches.

Back I come then, after exhibiting all these very suspicious circumstances relative to these Clerical Returns; back I come to enquire once more, what ground there can be for supposing that the population of England has increased. Here we have a whole list of parishes actually wasting away to nothing. This is a fact that it is impossible to deny; and yet you, and your patrons the boroughmongers, insist upon it that there is an increase of the population; and, what is more, a great part of the public believe you. This is one of those falsehoods that men tell till they believe it to be true themselves. There have been several of these great *national lies*. And there are several of them now indeed. They are *pieces of property* which the nation seems to claim as its own. An instance or two may not be amiss: because, at first blush, it appears monstrous to suppose that this population story is a lie. Yet it is a lie; and one that has great practical effect, too. It is at this moment assisting to complete the ruin of a great many farmers. They have read in the newspapers of the increased and increasing population of the country; and they take it for granted that the thing is so. Upon this ground they *expect an increasing demand for their produce!* "Only think of our increasing population!"—This exclamation you hear from them in all parts of the country. So that this population-lie is a thing of great *practical effect*. It is just a thing to suit the present system; it answers the present purpose; and this system sets all consequences at nought.

It is of importance, therefore, to make a regular attack

upon this great national lie ; in the setting about of which, I will as I said before, give an instance or two of other pieces of public property of the same sort. One of these is, that the late King made the twelve Judges independant of the Crown, by *giving up the power of Turning them out at his pleasure*. This is a pure lie. He did no such thing. He did nothing to render them more independent than they were before. Whether they were rendered at all independant by the act which gave them their places for life is more than I pretend to know. But, at any rate, that Act was passed in the reign of WILLIAM the Third, and not of GEORGE the Third ; and the lie of which I have been speaking ; this great national lie, was never heard of till about the time of PEG NICHOLSON, and the pop-gun plot ! It was hatched up at that time by the GIFFORDS and BOWLESES and other anti-jacobin hacks of the day. I myself believed it to be true for a long while. One of these very hacks, talking to me about it in 1801, and perceiving that I was gulled as well as the mass of the people, put me right ; when I expressed my *surprise* he said “ ‘Tis a feather : Old William is dead ; and we have a right to take it, and stick it into the cap of one that it will do some good to.” When I expressed my wonder at the *boldness* of sporting forth this lie, his answer was, the answer of the stock-jobbing press of the present day ; “Who is there to contradict us ; who is there that will dare contradict us ?”

Another instance is this that no Englishmen can have his liberty or property taken away from him *without consent of his peers*. This is a lie of a great deal more importance than the last. This is a prime piece of national property. So great a lie is it as for its equal never to have been heard of amongst men. In all cases under the game laws (under which nearly seventeen hundred men get imprisoned in a year;) in all cases under the revenue laws ; in all cases under the modern law of trespass ; in all cases under the vagrant laws ; in all cases under the poor laws ; in all cases under the militia laws ; in all cases between servant and master, and especially where the master is Plaintiff : in all these cases ; and in divers other cases, it happens nine times out of ten, that the punished party, whether by fine, by imprisonment, by hard labour, by whipping ; nine times out of ten it happens that the punishment

takes place, *without the consent of a jury of any sort!* Yet so grand a lie is this; so prime a piece of national property is it; so completely is it *part* and *parcel* of our **THING** which is the “envy of surrounding nations and admiration of the world;” so grand and so complete is this lie, that it is believed by ninety-nine hundredths of the people of England themselves.

Another great national lie was the Reduction of the Debt by the Sinking Fund. That however has been greatly impaired in point of virtue. The *Bank restriction* was another famous idea. The very word *restriction* itself. The bare invention of that one word was sufficient to immortalize the inventor. For nearly twenty years ninety-nine hundredths of this people believed that the cellars of the Bank were full of chests of gold; that the Bank wished to pay this gold in exchange for its paper; and that the Bank was, very much against its will, *restrained* from doing this.

Now, after having cited these instances, may I not hope that people will attend to what I have to say about this surprising story of the population? You have greatly the advantage of me, Parson. He that has a lie to uphold, and a lie, too, that flatters the vanity of the people, has a decided advantage over his opponent. There has a taste grown up of late years amongst us; a strange taste *to be like the continental powers*: to be one of CASTLEREAGH's great powers; to have whiskers as curled, spurs as long, swords as broad, rattletraps as noisy, and *population as great!* At the beginning of the French revolution, we very contentedly gave the French three persons for one, which we might do with great safety, because *one Englishmen could beat three Frenchmen*. But, somehow or other, after the ever memorable retreat of his Royal Highness the Duke of York, we discover that there was not this difference in the individuals, when pitted against one another. One of the great maxims of our worthies, is that our *spirits*, as they call them, are always to be kept up; that is to say, it is necessary always to keep us fed with some lie or other, to tickle our vanity, and make us patient, under expense, loss, and defeat. According to this maxim, the population story appears to have been trumped up. When the DUKE of YORK come home from the Helder, and left his army to be ransomed by the giving up of a great many thousands of French sailors, who were then our pris-

ners of war, the anti-jacobin hacks wrote a song, a bragging boasting song, ridiculing the French and the Dutch, and calling them cowards. This song was actually distributed and sung about the streets *by authority*. It represented the French as having been beaten, and welcomed the Duke home as a conqueror! This was only to keep up the spirits of the people; and the population lie has, doubtless, the same amiable purpose. The empty headed coxcombs, down yonder talk about the "British Empire;" being an empire, it must, necessarily, have a good many people in it; and, therefore, we have been at work to swell ourselves out, till it is we, and not the French, according to the old song, that are *bursting like the frog in the fable*. In short to cry up the population; to make the world believe, and particularly to make the duped people of England believe, that there has, of late years, been a great increase of population in this kingdom, has been a point constantly laboured at; as constantly as to make them believe, that they were free, and that all other nations were slaves. Thus you hear the Courier newspaper, for instance, observing, with all the coolness imaginable, that it could wish with all its heart; such is its love of liberty; such is its innate love of liberty, that it could wish, with all its soul, to see the people of France *as free as the people of England are*; but that it knows too much of human nature to believe the French people *capable of enjoying so much liberty*! Next after the English, the modern English, come a part of the Americans, for cool impudence in this sort of way; and you frequently hear a prig from Virginia, or Carolina, or Kentucky or Tennessee, who has perhaps, let a negro's guts about his heels half a dozen times: you very often hear one of these prigs observing, coolly as possible, that the French are not yet in a state to be *capable of enjoying liberty*! I never hear these prigs without thinking that that is a bad law, that deprives me of the liberty of breaking their necks: just twisting their heads off, as one would twist off a cabbage. Yet this abominable impudence; this cool, this placid, this Quaker-like impudence, answers its purpose for *home use*, at any rate. At the present day it does not deceive the French people, the intelligent part of whom really entertain the opinions expressed in my last Register; but the impudence serves to keep up the cheat in England. It serves to make the people believe, and it does make them

believe that, at any rate, *the French are slaves!* It communicates that comfort to their kind souls; and it makes them like the Government for having restored the Bourbons which has made the French slaves. It is all a lie from beginning to the end; but that is no matter: it serves to buoy up the THING; and that is all that is wanted.

After these instances, are we to believe in an *increase* of our population without any reason for such belief, and after all that we have seen above, tending to an opposite conclusion? There is no reason why there should have been an increase of population; and all the proof that we have on this subject, rests upon *three population returns*, laid before the House of Commons, and published by the order of that House. According to these returns, the population, that is to say, the number of persons, in England alone, has increased since the year 1801, from 8,331,192, to 11,261,437, : that is to say, to speak in round numbers, there has been an addition of *three millions* made; an addition of *three millions* to *eight millions in the course of twenty years!* A falsehood so monstrous as this; a lie so glaring, never I believe was put upon paper before. Out of what cause it arose, is not for me to say; but mind, here is a country which it is pretended, in the same Returns, did not contain quite five millions of people in the year 1700. Here is this country which took a *hundred years* to make the five millions into eight millions; here is this same country making the *eight millions* into *eleven millions* in the course of twenty years!!! Bang! Bang! Bang! Let the world produce us the like of this if it can. The country had according to these return-makers, but five millions of people in it in 1700; and yet this same country, actually *adds* to its numbers three millions in the course of the *last twenty years!* And, then, pray, credulous public, do observe, that the numbers increase just as much in the last twenty years, as they increased during a hundred years before! But, *upon the face of the thing*: without going into any enquiry about it: without any argument or any fact, is it not monstrous to attempt to make us believe that a population of eight millions, has swelled up to eleven millions in the course of twenty years, one half of which years have been years of *war*, and the other half years of *distress*, and during the whole of which, there has been emigration going on from this country to the United

States of America, and no emigration from other countries to this? Is not this a monstrous proposition? Is it a thing to be believed, though upon the oaths of fifty thousand return-makers? If we can believe this, we may believe that there may be a hundred millions of people in England in the course of a couple of centuries more. Indeed there must be, if this increase go on: and why it should not go on, if the present story be true, no man can give us a reason.

Then, if we *take a look back*, we shall find, that in 1600 there could have been only about a couple of million of people in the country; that a couple of hundred years before that, there could have been no people at all in the country, or, only two or three pairs turned down as breeders, at any rate; and then, how the devil *came the churches!* They were built *four hundred years before that*; and will you, PARSON, undertake to make us believe that the churches were built, without there being any body to go to them; that they were built too without hands, and that they bred the people in their bellies; that they made the people, and that the people did not make them? Will you undertake to persuade us to this, Parson? Yet, this you must undertake and you must succeed in it, too, before you can make us believe, that England contained eight millions of people in 1801, and eleven millions of people in 1821.

Upon the face of the thing it is false. If a man were to come and tell you that all his mares had taken to have two foals at a time instead of one; or that they had taken to breed every nine months in place of every eleven months; you would not believe him the sooner for his swearing to it, or for his bringing an account of it upon paper signed by his bailiff and his carter. You would say: No, no, my friend: you are, doubtless, a very honest fellow; but you and your people are all mad. Yet, your population story, is not a bit less incredible than would be this fellow's story about his mares. If we have been increasing at this rate, can you contrive to hatch a reason why the French *should not have increased at the same rate?* Not you indeed. I defy all the parsons that ever sucked down tithe-pig, to give us a reason for believing that the French have not been increasing as well as we. Seeing, therefore, that we have got from eight to eleven millions during the last twenty years, it follows, of course, that the French, who stood estimated at a

about thirty millions at the time that we had eight, must now have upwards of thirty seven millions ! The rest of the nations of Europe (unless you can show us a reason to the contrary), must have gone on augmenting their population at the same rate. Thus, then, Europe has received more than a fourth of addition to its population within the last twenty years ; and it happens, that, just at the end of these twenty years our population-increasing Ministry are proclaiming, that throughout the whole of Europe, there is an **OVER PRODUCTION OF HUMAN FOOD** ; and that this over production is so great, as to produce a series of calamities, which, in one particularly unhappy part of our own country, has led to *innumerable deaths by starvation*.

Again, therefore, I say, that, upon the face of it, the population story is false. You will say, "WHY ; why should all these "people make false returns ?" I do not say that they have all made out false returns. I do not charge any particular person with making false returns. I can see motives enough for swelling out the numbers : I see the old frog in the fable plain enough : but this is not my affair : my affair is the fact. There have been three Returns made out. I am about to prove that the first, or the second, **MUST BE FALSE** ; and having shown that, I may, I think, laugh at the third ?

The public will observe, that, prior to the year 1801, *there is no proof* pretended to be in existence. All before that time is matter of *estimate* ; and those who have read the book of the thief catching Doctor COLQUHOUN, will be able to form a judgment of what sort of work, in a case like this *estimating* is. In short, it is just what a man pleases to make it. He wants to come at a certain point. If the basis of his estimate does not bring him to this point he alters the basis ; that is all. But in the year 1801, we came to an *actual enumeration of the people*. Here there was no estimating. The querist were to go from house to house, they were to take an account of every man, woman, and child, and write it down. From each parish they were to send this account to the Government. Each account was to be signed by the parson, and by the parish officers. Now, then, here was truth to be sure. In 1811 there came another return ; and, if there be any man in his senses, in England to deny that one of these two contains a lie, England must

# STEPHENS' MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1840.

*Continuation of Cobbett's second Letter to Parson Malthus.*

contain a more profligately impudent wretch than any other country upon earth.

We are now going to see a piece of lying, which is a real curiosity. The reader will please to observe, that the two Returns were not made out in exactly the same form. The columns in the first return, as far as they related to numbers of persons, stood thus :—

Persons chiefly employed in agriculture.

Persons chiefly employed in trade, manufactures, or handicraft.

All other persons not comprised in the two preceding classes.

Total number of persons.

I beg the reader to pay attention to this ; because, as he will soon see, the detection of this great national lie ; of this grand, this superb humbug, turns, in a great measure, upon this distribution of persons. Between the year 1801 and the year 1811, I wrote several articles in the Register, upon the subject of the poor rates and the population. I combated you, Parson MALTHUS, by means of this very Return of 1801. Here, said I, is cause enough for the sufferings of the labourers and the increase of the poor rates. But, stop : I am before my story. I must, before I go any further state the particulars of the Return of 1801.

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Persons chiefly employed in Agriculture..... | 1,524,227 |
|--|-----------|

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Persons chiefly employed in Trade, Manufacture and handicraft..... | 1,789,531 |
|--|-----------|

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| All other Persons not comprised in the two preceding classes..... | 5,017,434 |
|---|-----------|

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Total of Persons | 8,331,192 |
|------------------|-----------|

Here, said I ; here is quite enough to account for the misery of the labouring classes and for the increase of the poor rates. Here are five millions of idlers to three millions and a third of people doing work of any sort whatever ! Here are five idlers to three and a third of working people. No wonder that we see so much misery ! And, then, I appeal to *you*, in the most pathetic strains. "Come, come, blessed PARSON MALTHUS, come ! come with thy check-population powers, and do put a stop to the breeding of these five millions of idlers, least they, in the words of Holy Writ, *swallow us up quick !*" But you, PARSON MALTHUS, instead of listening to me, persevered in your project for diminishing the increase of the labourers ; and that project went on till, at last, it came out in a sort of tapering dribble, from Lawyer SCARLETT.

However this was a shocking picture to exhibit to the nation. It was really a horrible sight, to behold *five millions of idlers* sucking away the blood and sweat of three millions of industrious persons. Five drones to three bees was making it the devil of a hive to live in. That famous old lady the Bank of England had brought her family to a fine pass. At last, the time came for making out *another Return* ; and now let us see how that Return was managed. Let us see, also, how it squared with the first Return.

A *new mode* of making out the Return was fallen upon. An *increase of population we were to have, of course !* But, what we had to look at was to see whether the idlers *increased or decreased*. When the new Return came out in 1811, I was in *great haste to get it* ; because, having taunted the System so many times with its *five millions of idlers*, I suspected that the new Return would *cause the number of idlers to diminish*. With great eagerness, therefore, I twirled over the leaves of this Return as soon as I got it. Ah the return makers have been too cunning for me ; or at least the new Return was calculated to *bother me*. I expected to find the Return made out in the same manner that it was made out before. There were before, agricultural persons, 1,524,227 ; trade, &c. 1,789,531 ; all others, 5,017,433. Very well, said I : now let us see what the present *numbers of persons* compared with those of 1801. Oh, no ! the new Return *took care that I should not see this !* It did not speak of *persons*, as before, but of **FAMILIES** ! Why this change ?

What was it for? The answer will suggest itself to the reader in a minute.

The new Return stood thus:—

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <i>Families in Agriculture</i> .....                  | 657,353          |
| <i>Families in Trade, Manufactures, &amp;c.</i> ..... | 923,558          |
| <i>All other Families</i> .....                       | 391,450          |
| <hr/>   |                  |
| <b>Total of Persons</b>                               | <b>9,538,827</b> |

Here is a pretty change in the space of ten years! The idlers were five millions out of eight in 1801. Consequently the families of idlers would at that time have contained five in number for every three of both the other classes! Pray mark this. If the Return of 1801, had stated families instead of persons, there must have been five families of idlers, to three families and a third of the other classes. In short, something approaching towards *twice as many* families as the two other classes contained. But, what the devil do we find, PARSON, in this new Return? Why we find *more than five times* as many families in the two other classes as in this class of idlers! Ten years before there was but a *million and a half* of agricultural people, while there were five millions of Idlers. But, in this new Return, there are almost *twice as many* families of the agricultural people as there are of those of the idlers! Ten years before there was only a *million and two thirds* of persons in trade, handicraft and manufacture; and there were five millions of idlers; but now behold there are *nine hundred and twenty three thousand* families of trade and handicraft people; and only, so help me God, *three hundred and ninety one thousand some odd* families of idlers!

Now, PARSON, *which* was the lie? Of these two Returns which was the lie, PARSON? To be sure wonderful is the gullibility of this people; and therefore they may believe that both returns were true; or, at least, there are some amongst them that may. But, before they can believe this, they must believe two things: not, that black is white and that white is black; but something a great deal more incredible than that. The increase of the population, during the ten years that we have just been speaking of, is stated at a *seventh*, a pretty good increase; but never mind that. The labouring classes, must, therefore, *as to number of persons*, have

been when the last Return was made, 3,787,029. So that, if the first Return was true, and the last Return also, there must in 1811 have been, amongst the labouring and trading classes, only *two persons* and the third part of another person to *each family*! That is to say only seven persons including *lodgers* to *three families*!

Such a lie was never put in print; not even in a romance, on any other occasion in the world. The monstrous falsehood; the prodigious impudence in this case, puts an end at once, to all arguing about the thing. One of these two returns must be false. No one will deny that one of them is false. Which is the *most* false it would be very difficult to say; and yet I believe, it must be a bold man indeed who would take upon him to say that the last Return is any truer than the falsest of these two.

I have now, I think, settled the point; not as to what the number of the people of England really is; for that would be very difficult to be guessed at, even to be guessed at, I say, by any of these things that have gone under the name of Returns. But I have settled the point, that the statements in these Returns are not worth a straw. If the two first Returns be true, then, in the year 1811, the persons in the families of labourers, journeymen, farmers, tradesmen, manufacturers and merchants: if those two returns were true the persons in a family of these classes, could upon an average, not possibly amount to more than *two* and one third of another, including lodgers! So, that if those two Returns were true, there could have been no children at all amongst all these classes! Now, we know that this was not so. We know, then, that one or the other or both of these Returns *must have been false*. We know that there was a great national lie somewhere in it. As one of those two returns was a lie, what reason have we to suppose the *third to be true*, when its result is a statement at war with nature, with reason, with common sense; when, in fact, it inculcates belief in an impossibility? Upon the face of it, it is false. The more we reflect upon it, the more we are convinced of its falsehood. Reason upon it forward or backward; adopt a belief in it; pursue that belief to its consequences; go upwards or downwards; and the conclusion is so monstrous as to make you blush at your credulity. If the second Return and the third Return be true, two more centuries must see

the English people swarming like the lice in Egypt ; and three centuries back (four centuries after the churches were built), there could have been only a single Adam and Eve turned down to breed ! Upon the face of it, again and again I say, the thing is a lie. The *Returns* : these only have you to oppose to every thing like reason upon the subject ; and one of the first two of these I have proved to be a lie.

Thus, then, is the whole fabric of delusion demolished. This great national lie, will doubtless, live for some time to come yet ; but it has now got a blow. It will not be so successful as it was. It will continue to gull those who like to be gulled ; but they are not of a great deal of consequence. I have given the lie a blow, in short, and in the course of a twelvemonth, I shall have pretty nearly deprived it of its powers of delusion. This however is only the *first part* of what I have to address to you. Your doctrine of the *law of nature* is an interesting matter ; and especially at this time, when between sixteen and seventeen hundred men in the course of a year are put into prison for endeavouring to catch *wild animals*. No small part of these are sent to prison by *parsons* : and yet you, PARSON MALTHUS, are for leaving them to the *law of nature* : that is to say you are for leaving them to the law of nature when they come to ask for relief. But you say nothing about leaving them to the law of nature when they are in pursuit of hares, pheasants, and partridges. These matters, however must be reserved for another occasion. My business, at present, was the demolition of the Population Lie, in which, at any rate, I have made a very good beginning.

W.M. COBBETT.

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TO MR. JAMES KIRK.

*The "Castle" Chester, September, 4th, 1840.*

My Dear Sir,

The question you have put to me is one of great weight, That the subject involved in it should have arrested your attention is not to be wondered at. He must have been born blind or have long have been blinded by the God of this world, who does not see the many and the manifold tokens of God's displeasure towards this our guilty land. The marks of His awakened anger are every where around us, we

cannot miss but see them. It only remains for us to prove by our deeds whether we be willing to take the warning in time, or whether we will yet harden our hearts and be "stricken any more."

The change which time has been working upon the character of the English people, almost unperceived, has become so apparent of late, that it would be idle here to do more than mention the simple fact. Some indeed wonder, some bewail, and some say that they can controul it, but none deny that the change has taken place. It has shewn itself by signs too unequivocal to be mistaken. The bulk of the people have lost much of that strong feeling of freedom, manly worthiness and self-respect, which made their forefathers what they were : too high minded to suffer any encroachment to be made upon their own rights, or to make any inroad upon the rights of others. Never, I believe, in the history of this country was there so large a proportion of her "citizens" living upon plunder as thieves, upon charity as paupers, or upon wages paid to them for protecting property against the attacks of those, who *steal* because, for the most part, they have never been taught to do better ; or *take*, either because they cannot find work to do, or because where they actually toil much beyond their strength, they cannot in return have bread enough to keep themselves and their little ones alive. Let but any one for a moment reflect upon the numbers of his fellow countrymen who pass from year to year through the workhouses and gaols of England, as well as the casual poor and the undetected thief, together with the countless host of poor-law officials, watchmen, police and military, and I am sure if he know anything of English History he must allow that dependence, poverty, wretchedness, vice and crime, are in proportion much greater now than at any former period. In other words, the stuff or bulk of the nation, has undergone and is still undergoing change for the worse, such a change as threatens overthrow or dissolution ; on the other hand the rich are employed, not in removing the causes which produce all this poverty and crime, but in punishing and repressing it. They seem eaten up with fear, least those, whom they ought by kind treatment to have inspired with affectionate respect, should, in their blind rage and by some sudden effort of their united strength, avenge themselves for the wrongs that have been done them by a

general and indiscriminate onslaught upon all, who are better off than themselves. The poor hate the rich as their oppressors, the rich dread the poor because they well know how sorely they have wronged them ; and how much reason they have therefore to take vengeance on those who have brought them to their present pitch of wretchedness, whenever the time is in, and the means of wreaking their pent-up fury are put into their hands. No state can be more dreadful, more appalling than this. Every body feels it and knows it to be so. Mutual affection and mutual respect are at an end. Smothered hate has taken the place of open-hearted love, and all distrust of that generous confidence which in times gone by we could repose in one another. The safety if not the very being of this country as to the rights of property, the permanence of institutions and obedience to the laws, rests, with whom ? and on what ? Why a day or an hour might witness the downfall of that fabric which it has taken ages to rear up ; and those who would overthrow it, are the very men who ought to have a thousand reasons of resistless weight to lead them to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of the law and not in resistance to it. Law to be hallowed ought to be good. Its ground should be righteousness and its end the well being of all who are within its pale. When, unhappily, it is otherwise, when protection is no longer afford in return for allegiance, then is there strife between the powers that rule and the spirits that should obey. This conflict must in the nature of things be a dreadful one, for it is a war within, a household that is sundered and broken up into hostile parts. If evil law make good its hold upon the people, we have a state of abject slavery with all its attendant degradation and misery. If on the other hand the evil law be withheld, there are many chances that in the letting loose of evil and fiery passions the bulwarks of all law and order will be overthrown, and a state of social chaos ensue. Misrule is the parent of insubordination. Every overstretch of power brings about a corresponding hatred to the authority which has been so much abused. It is thus nature is avenged ; God will not be mocked. By the unchangeable decree of His sovereign will He visits with the retributive judgments of his providence the nation that has long and willfully transgressed His laws. There is but one other possible issue of the fearful controversy in which we

are now engaged. It may be that there is yet a sufficient stock of christian principle amongst us as a people to withstand on the one side the impious misuse of power, which is crushing the poor; and on the other side the daring and reckless onslaught of those who in the name of freedom, threaten us with the destruction of all that is really good, and the establishment of the very worst species of despotism and oppression. England can only be delivered by a revival in the breasts of her children, of the high and holy principles of pure christianity. The word of God, the whole word of God, as it stands written, as plain men understand it, as it clearly and beyond all gainsaying was meant to be taken and followed—The word of the everliving and only true God must be spoken amongst us in all its fulness and in all its power. Within that book are the words whereby we may be saved. Where are the men, who will go forth, with their lives in their hands, and make known to their brethren what the will of God concerning them really is? We should never have sunk so low, had the watchmen kept a better look out, and duly warned us of our danger. The wolves would never have thus worried the flock if the shepherds had been mindful of their charge. I answer your question in the words of Christ, which have a deep meaning and a wide application, taking in not only the individual but the whole social body of which each individual is a member. “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness how great is that darkness.” Christians and above all christian ministers are set up to be the light of the world. From them should go abroad all truth. Their lips should teach and their lives should shew it forth. In thus fulfilling the great end of their mission a steady inroad is made upon the kingdom and power of sin: the good works like leaven in the mighty lump of evil, and slowly but steadily changes its whole character and appearance. That this mighty change may be wrought in the being of individual man and in the institutions which the laws of fellowship have called into existence, is, we are told, the wise and merciful design of the great schemer of human redemption and regeneration. The church, as made up of living members of the body of Christ, is appointed to carry the

principles of this wondrous plan into execution. These principles are evermore the same—the means are many and manifold, and are to be changed or shifted as men and times may be found to need them. But in all cases and under all circumstances the Church is to be God's witness to the work, is to stand forth as in Christ's stead before sinners and misdoers of every kind—is to warn, to threaten, to bid, to woo; to bind and to loose in all things according to the will and the words of their master, the only King of men. Wherever sin shews itself, no matter to what end or under what guise, it is to be fearlessly withheld. The thunders of heaven are to be launched against all who do evil, more especially are they to be checked and chastised, who wantonly turn the weapons, which have been put into the hand of law and power, against the poor, the weak and the helpless of their fellow men. The sons and daughters of want and of affliction have peculiar claims upon the interference of the church upon their behalf. Not to cover them with the shield of their almighty defender—not to draw the sword of the spirit in their righteous battle—not to make common cause with them in their unequal struggle—is to deny the Lord we profess to serve, to surrender the dearest interests of his kingdom, and to betray all that by man can be given up of heaven into the hands of the destroyer. That this has been done, and to a most fearful extent, is alas ! too true. The lights of the social body have gone out. Where they shine at all it is only to bewilder the poor who seek after and fain would find and walk in the way of truth, whilst they shed unhallowed splendour upon deeds of darkness, which, in the name and under the sanction of religion are committed by the professed followers of Jesus.

But however true it may be, it is now of no avail to dwell upon it any further than as a means of rousing the sleeper from his slumber, and a ground of solemn warning to ourselves. If we are aware of the existence of the evil and of the causes that have produced it, it becomes us above all things to guard against falling into the same snare. Watchfulness the most holy and the most active should be used to keep us in a state of constant readiness, to meet the powerful and wary foe that has already brought so many of the careless servants of Christ into subjection. We must no longer spend our time, except incidentally and for the pur-

pose above mentioned, in blaming the worldly mindedness of those christians, whether ministers or others, who have either ceased to be active champions of the truth, or who have openly taken sides with the enemies of all righteousness: but leaving these to stand or fall before the doom-seat of their own judge and ours, we should arm ourselves at all points for the fight, and, though but few and mean and weak, should fearlessly withstand every encroachment made by the wicked upon the rights of their poorer and more defenceless brethren. Every one in whose heart there is a measure of the knowledge and of the love of God should at once come out from amongst the wicked, and without looking at what may follow as regards himself, should to all, who lie within the range of his voice and influence, manfully declare the whole council of God. I feel fully persuaded that if a faithful discharge of this our bounden duty were performed by all those, who say they know what is the true and only remedy for our domestic evils, we should soon see a great and most wonderful change. The power of the truth well wielded is mighty indeed. It makes itself a passage where no way seems possible—it overthrows strongholds that have always been looked upon as above the reach of the utmost strength and skill to take them. It is by noising abroad of God's own truth that changes the most sweeping and the most sudden are brought about. The strong become weaker than water, and the weak wax stout hearted in the fight. I am sure your tongue will not cease to speak that which throughout a long life of thoughtful study you have seen and known of the ways of God, Strive, whilst you are yet awhile longer amongst us, to call off the attention of your younger brethren from the war of empty words, from jangling strife and bickerings one with another about things that mean nothing and end in nothing, point them to the great mark at which they should stedfastly aim, and exhort and encourage them, one and altogether, to begin in good earnest the work which God has given them to do, working with all their might whilst it is yet day, knowing that a night wherein no man can work will soon cast its shades around them.

The force of your example in conjunction with the sound conviction effected by your plain instruction will not be without its natural results. You will soon see the fruit of your

labours and, before you go from us in peace, your eyes will be blessed with a sight from afar off the coming reign of righteousness. Remember that it is in the order of providence to confound the mighty through the weak, Joseph's son with a mean band of lowly followers—fishermen and tentmakers, spake words whereby kingdoms were shaken and systems broken up, which it had taken the wit, the power and the wealth of ages to set up. Those words are living words. They never die. They live still. Then send them forth. Give them way. Speed them in their course. They are for the healing of the nations. You have men amongst you who neither lack knowledge nor boldness. Shew them what they ought to do, what they may accomplish. Guide them—help them, cheer them on and they will quit themselves like men. May God bless both them and you and all who feel for the burthened amongst their brethren.

I shall be glad to hear from you again. Tell me how, for your views agree with mine, and above all let me know what tokens of success there may be amongst the people of your neighbourhood for the speed of that truth which is able to make all men wise unto salvation.

Hoping now to be soon amongst you again

I remain,

yours very truly,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

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### STEPHENS AND O'CONNOR.

*The "Castle," Chester, October 14th, 1840.*

It was only the day before yesterday that I heard of the insertion in this magazine of a letter some time ago by Mr. Higgins, a fellow prisoner here, containing some very pointed and rather severe remarks on the conduct of Mr. Fergus O'Connor and others, together with a passage relating to myself, in which my conduct as a prisoner is favourably contrasted with theirs. The appearance of the above letter in a magazine bearing my name, has greatly annoyed me. I wish therefore to state that it was so published altogether without my knowledge and very much to my dissatisfaction. Mr. Higgins is of course perfectly free to speak or write what he thinks fit either about me or any one else, nor should I have taken any notice of this letter of his, had it not, most improperly, found its way into the pages of this magazine.

Any where else it might have gone for what it was worth without a single observation from me. Standing however where it does, it might look, and I am afraid will look, as though I had availed myself of the testimony he has voluntarily given in this communication in favour of one, who, though opposed to him in politics, will, he says, ever be endeared to him from his conduct as a fellow prisoner. I am well aware that it has been said that I enjoy all kinds of privileges in this goal, that these indulgences have been purchased by truckling to the government—that my fellow prisoners the Chartists, have in the meanwhile been treated worse than burglars and murderers, with a good deal more of the same kind of stupid nonsense, wilfully circulated for the purpose of rendering me hateful and obnoxious to the poor, whose cause I have advocated, and so long as I live shall advocate, to the utmost of my power. These slanders I never contradicted, and my object in writing this is not to contradict them. They shall pass away of themselves. And all that come after them shall pass away in like manner. If I have done any the smallest good to my heavy laden and almost friendless countrymen, my works, in time, will praise me, in spite of every effort to misrepresent and malign my actions and the motives that have inspired them. If on the other hand I have neither willed nor brought about any bettering in the wretched condition of the lower classes of the people, the popularity of the hour and the overstrained support of a party would avail but little in staying my fall into oblivion and contempt. The voluntary and frank avowal of a fierce opponent like Mr. Higgins, is one proof amongst many how futile is the attempt by slanderous and malicious misrepresentations to hide from the people for any length of time the true character of such of their friends as neither smiles nor frowns can move from the ground they have seen it wisest and best to take.

The policy pursued by Mr. O'Connor and some others mentioned in Mr. Higgins' letter I highly disapproved of and strongly opposed. For so doing I was denounced as a wretch, a renegade, a traitor, and all the other horrible and hateful names which men who would not follow the good counsels of their true friend, commonly lavish upon him as a sort of apology for their own folly, and as a pitiful revenge for their own shame and loss they have brought upon themselves by not attending to the wiser advice he so disinterestedly gave them.

Time has long since settled this business. It is now no longer a question who was in the right and who was in the wrong. It is agreed on all hands that the reckless and insane projects, which I boldly set myself against at the risk of popular favour and consideration, occasioned wide-sweeping and all but irreparable injury to the best interests and hopes of the people. I have no wish to exult over the fall of the men who wickedly compassed my overthrow. Their unfitness for the high and responsible office of leader and guide of the millions, who so generously trusted them to their own undoing, has become apparent. A master mind is wanted to bring order out of the general confusion. They are not men of this kind. They were placed in a false position. They occupied a station for which they were not qualified, and when the day of trial came they were not equal to its emergencies. Each man has at last found his proper level, and any thing now in the shape of vituperation may very well be spared. It is because Mr. Higgins letter savours of this that I regret its appearance, I bear no ill will against Mr. O'Connor or any one else who has basely and treacherously attacked me. So careful have I been of anything that wore the appearance of exultation over false friend or fallen foe, that I have given strict and positive injunctions against the insertion of all such letters or portions of letters of my own as contained any remarks that might seem to bear too hardly upon men, who have not only lost much of their influence with the people, but have also been made to suffer in their own persons the fatal consequences of their rashness and folly.

It is to set myself right with even the bitterest of my foes in this respect that I have been at the pains to disavow all knowledge of the insertion of Mr Higgins letter in this magazine, and to express my regret that it should have been allowed to appear. Some well meaning friend I dare say, has thought that it would be well to make public the opinions of a very violent opponent, who in forming his judgment could have no political or party bias in my favour. These expressions of individual or of public opinion are all very well when made elsewhere. But Here they are very much out of place. It has however so happened. I am sorry for it—but I could not help it;—and so I take my leave of the subject.

It may be as well to state here that in the "Peoples Mag-

azine,' which I have undertaken to conduct, and the first number of which will appear on new year's day, there will be no personal allusions of this offensive nature, either from my own pen or from the pen of any of the talented gentlemen whose co-operation I have secured in furtherance of the objects contemplated by the publication of the above mentioned Journal. Its pages will be devoted to the calm and temperate discussion of all questions, religious, political and social which bear or can be brought to bear, upon the condition and best interest of the People at large. The principles I have been known to advocate from the pulpit and the platform will be argued coolly but most resolutely, so as to set the holy cause of the oppressed fairly, fully and impressively before all classes of the community. I have long thought a work of this kind was very much wanted and have agreed to make the experiment. Many of the well meaning stand in need of instruction—many of the better taught would wish to have important questions of politics and morals more thoroughly gone into, than they can be in a paper whose columns are filled with the business and news of the day—whilst many, who might be won over to the side of truth and mercy, are left to form their opinion of the objects sought for by their oppressed fellow countrymen from the most prejudiced or the most hostile sources. The word of God will be the ground work of the sentiments put forth by the writers of the "Peoples' Magazine;" and whithersoever that word may lead they will fearlessly follow; whether they thereby gain the favour or incur the hatred of the rich or of the poor. They will strive to find out the truth and to teach that truth to others as far as they know it themselves. With what success remains yet to be seen.

I hope this statement of my utter ignorance of the way in which the document I have alluded to has found its way into the pages of this magazine and of my decided disapprobation of its insertion will be considered satisfactory to all who may have perused it. I also beg of the publisher to be more careful in future and on no account admit anything of a similar nature and tendency.

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

*The "Castle" Chester, October 10th 1840.*

**TO THE SOCIETY AND CONGREGATION OF  
KING STREET CHAPEL STALYBRIDGE—**

I have heard with much pleasure of your continued and increasing prosperity. Everything has seemed to be against you. The wrath of wicked men who have for years been in league to break you up, whatever it might cost them to bring about your destruction; the long absence from amongst you of those chosen and well tried friends who were set over you to feed, watch and keep the flock, and at a time when their presence and labours were most needed; a season of almost unexampled poverty and distress, which has overwhelmed many of the rich and mighty, whilst it has pressed the already poor down to the very earth—these are some of the unfavourable circumstances which have beset and threatened you now for a considerable period. But your trust was in God. You set your hope on Him—and He has been with you and has blessed you almost beyond what the boldest of you dared to look for. You have outstood it all, and you still stand, not fearing what man or fiend, what earth or hell can do against you. Have you not now had full proof that there is no power that can harm or touch those, who in all lowliness of mind but with all their heart give themselves and all that belongs to them into the hands of their heavenly helper? The hearts of all men and all the kingdoms of the world are they not in His hands? can He not do with them as seems Him meet and good? Does He not hold the ungodly in chains and keep them in check when they would overstep the bounds which He has set to their designs against the righteous? Hitherto, to try us and to prove us, and more fully to shew forth the mighty power of God in our deliverance, hitherto may they come but no further, We are safe from the snares of Sin and the strokes of evil so long as the God of Jacob is our refuge. Brethren fall down before God and thank Him for all that he has done; rise up before God and trust Him for all that He says He will do on your behalf. What is gone should call up a song of praise bearing your heartfelt gratitude to heaven; What is to come should find you more courageous and more resolute. Be ye therefore stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain

in the Lord.

The tide has already begun to turn. The hearts of many of your once bitter foes have been changed. They no more seek to harm or harrass you. Some have even become your friends, and bid you good speed in the holy work you have set yourselves to do. This is a mighty change indeed ! It is God's doing, and is wonderful in your eyes. You call to mind the promise—and you behold its fulfilment—The wrath of man shall praise Him and the remainder of wrath will be restrained.

Your absent friends will soon return to you, I trust in every thing the better for the trial they have had to go through. You long to look upon them once more, and pray that they may come in all the fulness of the gospel of peace, strong in the Lord and in the power of his might to enter again upon their accustomed labours. They long to be with you. In the loneliness of their bonds they pray for your steadfastness, and trust to find you more united, more loving, more laborious, diligent and zealous than ever. I fervently trust that these our mutual expectations will be realised. We shall then have abundant cause for thankfulness that we were thus seperated for a time. The result of your Sunday School Anniversary encourages me to hope that as regards your temporal circumstances the worst is overpast. Should it please God to smile upon you, to bless you in your basket and in your store, I am sure you will eat your bread with thankfulness, and be mindful each one after his power, of the children of affliction and want. Christ is most honoured by his followers when they reach out a helping hand to aid the poor, the sick, the widow, the stranger and the oppressed. For all such be unceasing in prayer, and, as far as in you lies, abounding in good works : so will the blessing of them that are ready to perish come upon you.

For myself I shall be ready to take my place amongst you as before, if such be your wish and will. Should you still think I can be helpful to you as a minister and friend you will find me as earnest and as happy in the work of my choice as you have found me heretofore. All I shall ask—all I shall want to know will be whether your call be unanimous and affectionate, as I doubt not it will be, and whether there is a reasonable probability that my feeble services will be acceptable and useful.

Many considerations have induced me to take the man-

agement of a monthly magazine, to begin in January next, the scope and design of which is to give more extended and permanent effect to that class of truth which for some years you have heard me advocate from the pulpit and the platform. The whole range of religious and political knowledge, as far as it bears or can be brought to bear upon the well being of Society, will be gone over as time and circumstances may require. Along with these serious and important subjects there will be associated matters of a lighter and more entertaining sort. In short, It will be my endeavour to make this projected magazine as instructive, useful and pleasing as I possibly can. I have already secured the assistance of some of the most sincere and most talented friends of the people, which gives me greater confidence in my anticipations of success, and enables me to speak in warmer terms of commendation than I could do were I left to depend entirely upon my own resources. If you are of opinion that this is a likely means of doing good you must co-operate with me in giving publicity to what I am about to do. I have long thought that something of the kind was wanted. Better men will not, or at least they do not undertake it—So I am resolved to go to work and to work away. If you have had proof how little I spared my tongue in what I thought was a good cause, you will soon see that has little will I spare my pen in the same cause—but, speaking or writing, will shew myself.

Your faithful Friend and Servant,

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

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*The "Castle" Chester, October, 15th. 1840.*

My Dear Sir

You and some others have been chosen as fit men to go to the neighbouring towns to see what can be done in the way of opening houses, for the reading and preaching the word of God amongst such of the poor as are most forsaken but who knew is good ground for thinking, so far from being unwilling to hear, are ready to welcome the truth which is able to make them wise unto salvation.

What have you done towards the execution of the trust committed to you? How many towns have you visited,—with how many of their more serious inhabitants have you opened a correspondence,—what cottage rooms or other buildings have been offered to you as preaching houses,—in

what instances have you availed yourself of these offers, and with what success? Or have you as yet done nothing,—has all the talk ended in nothing and left you just what and where you were?

There will be much for you to answer for, if, when so much work wants doing in the vine yard, you stand all the day idle, neither doing a hands-turn yourself nor caring whether it be done by others or not; You have been called and you are bound to do your master's bidding. You cannot say you stand in need of ought to fit you for the task on which you have been set, save only a heartier trust in Him who has sent you forth, and a warmer love to those who daily die, because you take no steps to seek and save them in their lost estate.

It is my strong belief that there is not a single town in all England in which your labours would be fruitless. It is not true that the people of this country are set against the truths of the christian religion. On the contrary they are athirst for them—they are feeling after them if happily they may find them. But they want teachers. They want men amongst them who will talk as Christ talked when He was upon earth; clearly, so that they may understand; sweetly, so that their withered hopes may bloom again; and with power, so that they may feel themselves, in their endeavours to walk after the word spoken to them, resting secure upon the strength of God and not left to their own weakness when summoned to do battle with the mighty evils they behold both within and without. In all these three particulars the preaching of the present day is sadly defective. In the first place the truths of the gospel have been taken out of the region of common sense and from their application to common things, and have been translated into a foreign jargon and applied to purposes far removed from the every day dealings and wants of mankind. They are not made to speak either to the bosoms or to the business of men. Can we think of anything more homely, more easy to be understood, more directly level with the mind, the wants, the feelings and the powers of man than were the blessed words of our Lord Jesus Christ? Is it any longer to be wondered at the lowest and meanest of the people—that the women, aye and the very children flocked after him and crowded round him to hear one who spake as man never spake? It is worth while to enquire whether the common People of Judea, Samaria and Galilee were in

a state of higher intellectual cultivation than the common people of this christian Empire. Had they been taught to read and write, to think and judge in a superior degree to ourselves—had they better means for the exercise of their reasoning powers, and more time to spend in the improvement of them than we have ? If the answer be yes, we must then ask, how it came to be so. How did it happen that the law of Moses wrought such better things for them than the Gospel of Christ has done for us ? Could the latter do more for men in this way than the spirit, and had they more cause for thankfulness for the shadow than for the substance, for the messenger who heralded the coming of the kingdom, than for the long looked for sway of the King of Peace himself ? Can it be that many, many hundreds of years of christian training, from father to son and from son to childrens children should have worsened and not bettered the human mind. Are our understandings dwarfed, stunted, dulled and hardened in proportion as christianity extends—are the means of fostering the human soul fewer and more imperfect—and the time needful for this first and holiest work now limited as the reign of Christ proceeds ? Ye wise men of the churches speak ! Ye heads of the house of the living God say ! for to you it belongs to give the answer. You tell us, no. You stand to it that as Christ and John grew in wisdom and in understanding so may we who belong to christ, and learn of Him, likewise to grow in all knowledge. Under his teaching we become men in understanding, able to grasp all the wonders of his heavenly kingdom. Well if this be so—if christianity be the only true mother of the mind, fostering and cherishing its powers, until they be full grown and mighty in all that belongs to our timely and everlasting welfare—and if she has for so many long ages been the tender nurse of the souls entrusted to her care, explain, if you can the mournful condition of the rational mind. Can christianity have done what you say it does. And can the people at the same time be what you reproach them with being, an ignorant, abandoned and infidel people ? Is there not a contradiction here ? It must, I think, be allowed if you will but ransack the question thoroughly, that there are many causes in operation amongst us, which act as stumbling blocks in the way of true religion and hinder it from making the progress it otherwise would. That the end at which christianity aims is the lifting

up of mankind out of the pit of ignorance, of sin and of misery, and the making of them wise unto salvation none can deny or doubt. I am the way, and the truth, and the life—is the short but full and weighty declaration of Christ, which sets forth in few words both the end and the means of the Redemption he accomplished for us. Nor can we conceive of any system so well calculated to elevate, to improve and perfect the mind and heart of man as the one unfolded and made known to us by the son of God. But in order to accomplish this, the good news must be told as He told it, and those who are to hear and be made joyful by it, must have it in their power to lend a thoughtful as well as a willing ear to the welcome tidings it brings to their weary and heavy laden souls. Now both these perquisites are wanting at the present time. There is as much difference between Christs manner of teaching and the manner employed by modern ministers, as there is between a doctor's prescription, a bill of indictment, or an act parliament and the every day talk of plain men who speak in all the homeliness of the mother tongue. The doglaton, the law jargon, and the mystification used in these instruments is every whit as intelligible to the multitude as are the technical phrases and artificial forms through which the doctrines and precepts of religion are conveyed to the people. Go into what church or chapel you will and listen to a full hours sermon from one of the best educated of our divines upon original sin, regeneration, faith, sanctification or what may happen to be the topic of his discourse for the day, and thence betake yourself to the workshop, the cottage, or the market-place, where the people meet, sit, gather together and talk and say how much there is in common between the subjects discussed. and the language made use of in the one place and in the other. Say how long an apprenticeship must be served to the craftsmen, the old wife and the youth growing up around them before they could so much as tell what the clergyman was talking about—and then say how closely when they come to understand them, these same things would come to their business and their bosoms. But read our Lord's sermon on the mount, the conversations he held with the people on divers occasions, and say whether if the self same things which he spake to his brethren after the flesh, taking into account their national condition and habits, were spoken by us to our brethren as we find them to stand

in need of the self same things, and duly considering their habits and condition, tell me I pray you, whether the people would not then understand us and follow us and cry out "blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Nothing can be done to mend the people unless the truths we set before them are plain, simple and applicable to their situation. Bear this in mind, speak as one man speaks to another—like friend to friend, neighbour to neighbour. You may be homely without being low—nay the more homely the more lovely and more beautiful will be your words. The flowers of the hedge-row and the field are looked on by every eye and trodden down by every foot, yet are they fair of sight and sweet of smell. And so it is with what belongs to the hearths and to the hearts of mankind at large. In morals especially there is nothing applicable to one class which is not equally interesting to another. As men these things appertain to us all in common; and he is most likely to command universal attention, and to see his efforts attended by universal success. Who knows how to direct the means and appliances he employs, in such ways as to bring them to bear upon the mind and happiness of universal men.

At the same we must not overlook the hinderances we shall have to encounter, even were the matter and the manner of our teaching every thing it ought to be. The people of this country, setting every thing else aside, have not a fair chance of listening to the truths of the gospel, as those truths should be listened to. Now for some ages at least the body, and with the body the mind also, of the workers of the land has been weakened and worn down by overdriven toil. He who from seven years of age till very nigh the day of his death, has had to work for sixteen hours out of the twenty-four—to say nothing of the wear, the tear, and the fretting of his mind the while, is but badly fitted at the best for a thoughtful investigation of the truths of the Christian Religion. To call upon such a one to hear, to read, to mark and to learn, is little better than a mere mockery. He can not do it, or but very imperfectly. And we are bold to assert, that until the People of this country have a little more rest both for body and mind, they never can, and never will become the enlightened, the moral and the happy people, which it is the object of christianity to make them and all mankind.

It will be one part of your message from God to the people to speak much of this. Are churches, endowments and college bred ministers essential to the preaching of the gospel, quite as much, and much so in that state of mind in the people to whom the gospel is to be preached, which will render it possible for them to reflect, reason, resolve and act in unison with the blessed truth made known to them. There is a preparation, a discipline necessary for the hearer as well as for the speaker. When shall we understand this—and begin to begin at the right end.

But it is not enough that the truths of the gospel be spoken clearly so that the learner may understand them. They must be set forth winningly, in order that he who hears may feel the springtide of hope rising in his soul. It is better as well as easier to lead than to drive. With all the help we can get we find it sometimes hard work enough—and ever and anon too much for our poor strength—to wrestle successfully against flesh and blood, to fight the good fight and lay hold on eternal life. Go once more to the blessed Jesus. Walk by his side as he wanders with men. Hearken to the words as they fall from his lips. Watch him in all his dealings with his followers, and with the world. Mark how he bore with them—how he suffered long and was kind. See with what patience, with what condescension, with what tenderness, with what fulness of love he adds line to line, and precept to precept. To what class of sinners does he not address himself, into what haunts of the most forlorn, the most wretched, the most abandoned of our kind does he not plunge—to seek and to save them that were lost—to pluck the brands out of the devouring fire! Would you have the same success in your preaching, you must go forth in the same sweet spirit. To your poor lost, helpless brethren, no matter by what sins they may be defiled, by what outcast bywords they may be branded, and say to them in the words and in the stead of Him that sent you “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden—come learn of me, for I am lowly in heart—Come unto me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” This gentleness is compatible with the utmost firmness and even severity, where the stern and awful may be needed. Christ knew how to wield the thunderbolts and launch forth the lightnings of heaven. He poured out woe, woe, woe upon the heads of the sinners. But these

were the scribes, the pharisees and hypocrites, whom now-a-days no one dares to touch. Woe, woe, woe unto them, who keep the key; but neither go in themselves nor suffer them to enter who stand without and knock in vain—who rob widows houses and then pay tithes of mint, of anniseed, and of cummin—who leave the fatherless, the stranger, and the needy to starve, and then lay gold upon the altar and say “Corban,” it is a gift ! These and all such like are to be warned, to be threatened, to be denounced. But all such as are willing to hear, and ready to obey are to be comforted and encouraged. The poor and weak especially are to be strengthened and supported. Every thing we can do to drive off and keep away their oppressors from them, that must we do. Every thing we can do to hold them up in the unequal fight against the mighty who enthrall and trouble them, that must we also do. And by so doing we shall accomplish a double good—we shall weaken the force of him who is already too strong, and strengthen the hands of him who as yet is far too weak. Such is ever the twofold effect of the faithful and affectionate preaching of the gospel.

I remarked also that the truths of religion should be taught with authority. Christ left no doubt upon the minds of the people as to the authenticity and validity of his mission. He shewed forth every kind of token and wonder to those who came to ask him whence and for what he was come amongst them. I need not go over the list of the mighty works he did when he was here upon earth. Enough to say that he who fed the hungry, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and raised the dead—he at whose bidding the winds were hushed and waves sank down—he who all the powers of heaven and earth acknowledg'd as their sovereign lord—and who wielded those awful powers only for the good of man, and most of all for the relief of such as their fellow-men had driven out from amongst them, such a Saviour as this could no other than speak with authority and not as the hypocritical scribes. And therefore was he followed, because all good came with him. wherever he appeared, and because those who put their trust in him found in their own hearts a copy of that blessed example which he continually set before them. It is true we can no longer do the works he did. But we can do others not less mighty—not less needed—not less effectual in their influence upon the minds of an observing and atten-

tive people, So long as ministers seek their own advantage and not the welfare of the flock entrusted to them—so long as they shun every danger they would incur by defending the righteous cause of the oppressed, and rather take sides with the oppressor—so long as the lives they live and the works they do are a reproach to the religion they profess to teach—so long they have no right to expect any other result from their ministration than formality, hypocrisy, infidelity and wide-spread wickedness. I put it to you whether such is not too much the case at the present day. But could the people on the other hand once see amongst them a little band of Godly men who would boldly lift up their voices like a trumpet against all sin in high places, who would judge the fatherless and plead for the widows--who would not shun fearlessly to declare unto all men the whole council of God—who in lip and life, in word and deed were worthy followers of their heavenly master—what then think you would be the result? would not men in every where in flocks set to their seal that God was true—would not, in one word a nation be born in a day? Yes—you learn this would be the case—Then up good men and true—up and be doing! Look to Jesus for the grace, the gifts, the power you need. Go forth in his spirit—in his name—in his strength—and his blessing will go with you. It will not then be long before you find his word in deed and in truth fulfilled—that word which he spoke for the encouragement of just such men as you are—“Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”—and again that sweet promise to his faithful few—“Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them and that to bless them.”

Yours very truly

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS.

